A Southern Lawyer Who Became A Mystic

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Sloan Bashinsky

ABSOLUTELY AMAZING eBOOKS

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To Key West Poet Laureate Robert Frost
for taking the road less traveled by and that made all the difference

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The author thanks his friends and relatives
for putting up with him,
and Absolutely Amazing Books in Key West
for publishing his often stranger than fiction ramblings

Heh -
Key West is known for writers, poets, playwrights and eccentrics.

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Preface

I MOSTLY LIVED IN KEY WEST and just above there from late 2000 through 2018. I learned most people living in but not born in the Florida Keys were on the lam from … something. There isn't much about that part of my life in this trilogy of little books by a southern lawyer who became a mystic:

- *A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN*
- *LAW & SPIRIT*
- *SPONTANEOUS RAMBLINGS ON SOUL ALCHEMY*

The three little books offer snapshots of my progression from birth and growing up in Birmingham, Alabama into lawyering, writing and being a mystic, the whole nine yards of which might take 10,000 pages to tell.

To save you the trouble, I tell you right now that I would be nuts if I thought I could prove in a court of law that any of the mystical events reported in the trilogy actually

happened. Yet, during my often stranger than fiction meanderings I met quite a few people having mystical experiences. After hearing of some of my mystical experience, they did not say I was nuts, or made it up, or imagined it.

I sometimes wish doctors of the mind were treated to just a small portion of what I experience ongoing, and that I am a fly on the wall, watching. One good thing for me about living in Key West was it was viewed as an open-air insane asylum where you could say just about anything that struck your fancy and not get locked up.

Many Key West and Florida Keys people came to know of me through my claiming God told me to run for public office: six times for mayor of Key West, three times for county commission, and one time for school board. I attended lots of candidate forums and did lots of media interviews.

And, there were my somewhat popular blogs, goodmorningkeywest.com and goodmorningfloridakeys.com, where I published daily about my political, human and metaphysical wanderings. I was familiar on bigpinekey.com's popular Coconut Telegraph public forum. The relatively popular good morning blogs ran their course and were replaced by the less visited afoolsworkneverends.blogspot.com, which seemed a more fitting moniker.

Maybe I never came close to winning a run for public office – whew! - because I hated politics and said things no politician would dare say and hope to get elected. But then, I was told a number of times that I had really good ideas and could have won if I had not talked about God, angels, demons …

Meanwhile, in the fall of 2019, I tried to get NPR interested in this trilogy, which I had parked on separate blogs. After reading of that, my longtime internet buddy, Sancho Panza, commented, and some banter ensued:

Sancho: Sloan, I don't think NPR will find your piece on Charlotte and the Judge appealing to their Liberal Audience … not PC, my man!

Don Quixote (me): When I lived in Boulder, and since then, I have thought politically correct is a terminal spiritual disease.

Someone recently told me to try Terry Gross, who hosts Fresh Air, and I got a canned email back saying they cannot respond to everything they receive, but they read it all.

Here is the text of my email.

> Dear NPR Fresh Air:
> I wish to present for Terry Gross and her show producer's consideration, *A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN*, self-published paperback, which started falling out of me in 2004, after I heard a couple of commentaries on NPR about stagnated writers whose careers were rejuvenated by synchronistic experiences. I was a stagnated writer.

There were several reprints, and I suppose I gave away about 2,000 copies. I recently republished it at A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN, by a southern lawyer who became a mystic, where anyone can read it for free. Perhaps people not from Alabama, who read it, come away with a new perspective of Alabama. The book introduces 6 larger than life Alabama people, who influenced me during my formative years.

1. My spiritual father, in his teens fell under a train he was hopping and lost both legs above the knee, attended night law school, piloted the federal debtors court, got appointed to the federal bench, used to drink moonshine, cussed, and did not attend church, ran the Alabama Democratic Party behind the scenes, before George Wallace took over state politics.
2. My black nanny, daughter of a southern slave, the greatest cook in the world, my spiritual mother, who loved me as her own, a living saint, worked behind the scenes during the time of troubles in Birmingham, counseling her people to be patient with and tolerant of their white brothers and sisters.
3. My father's older brother, called a spade a spade, a healer pediatrician babies loved, treated babies, not mamas, the greatest fisherman in the world, I wanted to be my father.
4. My great grandfather Polish Jew immigrant, wise, honest, small town banker, married Southern Baptist daughter of a Confederate officer, townspeople brought him their disputes to settle, instead of the town lawyers.
5. My mother's Episcopal minister, hated asking his congregation to give money to his church, told his vestry he would close their church in the rich, white Birmingham suburb, Mountain Book, if blacks were denied attending services.
6. The wise, smarter than a whip family attorney, who became a lawyer the old way, by working in a law firm, who told me I'd never be happy until I found God.

In "a prior life", I was interviewed by Jane Pauley on *TODAY*, about *HOME BUYERS: Lambs to the Slaughter?* There were lots of media interviews regarding that book. Then came *SELLING YOUR HOME $WEET HOME* and *KILL ALL THE LAWYERS? A Client's Guide to Hiring, Firing, Using and Suing Lawyers*. Lots more media interviews.
That life ended, so to speak, and things got a lot more interesting, somewhat reflected in *A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN* and a more recent little agony and ecstasy sequel, *LAW & SPIRIT, by a Southern Lawyer Who Became a Mystic*, about my progression from human law into spiritual law, and then flashes back to my sometimes amusing and not so amusing legal training at the University of Alabama School of Law and later related events.

The third little book in the trilogy is a bit more ... mystical and intense.
Spontaneous Ramblings on Soul Alchemy, by a southern lawyer who became a mystic

Sincerely yours,
Sloan Bashinsky

Sancho: I think a little different; instead of you writing a book about interesting people you've known, you should look at finding an author to write the story of your life ... it would be very interesting, I think! Oink!

Sloan: If such a writer exists, s/he will be very busy for quite a while.

Part One

A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN

By a Southern Lawyer Who Became A Mystic

THIS FIRST LITTLE BOOK IN A TRILOGY was set up by a poem, which fell out of me as fast as I could write it.

SHANGHAIED

A calling to serve carries its own wisdom,
which legitimates both the calling and the serving
so that the two are one.

Only the one called to serve
can know this wisdom,
and for some who are called
the knowing comes easily,
while for others the knowing is a fiery baptism.
Each calling is different,
and while some callings can be declined,
others cannot,
and those whose calling is without repentance
know they are in it for the duration of the calling,
and while others may try to persuade them out of it,
the calling for ones such as these always prevails;
thus is it advised to all called for keeps
that they view their calling as a blessing
even when it seems at times to be a curse,
and that they try to reconcile the loss of their captain status
and allow the Spirit of God to man the helm of their ship,
and be glad and willing crew members thereon,
knowing that all sailing ships of souls
need a crew as well as a captain
to maintain and navigate the ship through
seas of many tones, depths and flavors;
so consider each league sailed
as part of the overall journey
going to where the captain deigns to go
by using whatever winds and sea currents available
to navigate the ship to the experiences
this ship and crew need to have
in order to fulfill their calling and its wisdom
revealed by the journey of many leagues,
many known only to the ship and its crew,
all of whom come to know,
some sooner than others, that once conscripted
there is no safe jumping ship.

(7 June 2004)

GREETINGS

THIS LITTLE BOOK OF STORIES about five large Birmingham, Alabama, people, and one from Poland via Troy, Alabama, started falling out of me, amidst much weeping, in the early fall of 2004.

Here's how this little book began:

From	sloanbashinsky@hotmail.com *[no longer valid]*
Sent	Thursday, September 16, 2004 4:33 PM
To	mecommentary@npr.ord, atccommentary@npr.org, sflowers@npr.org
Subject	commentary submission

Dear NPR,

After a two-year hiatus, I recently had my geographic and fiscal circumstances change so that I could again listen regularly to NPR. Then late last week I heard on an afternoon NPR show a couple of commentaries about stagnated writers whose careers were rejuvenated by synchronistic experiences. The next or maybe the next afternoon, I heard a young woman read at length out of a book she had written about her public service experiences in Africa. Yesterday morning I was moved to tell a good buddy of a remarkable judge I'd once known, who was, I felt, a saint, even though he did not attend church. My friend said he hoped I would write it all down and give him and our minister a copy. I then sat down and wrote a piece that mostly wrote itself and took me into some pretty deep places. After I read it to my new landlady and new friend yesterday afternoon, and told her how it had all come about and that I was thinking perhaps of submitting it to NPR, she said that she was already thinking along those lines, and that the piece might be the first of a number of somewhat similar pieces, perhaps to make up a book. I had three non-fiction books published/handled by Simon & Shuster, several lifetimes ago, it seems. Then my writing became mostly mystical non-fiction, verse and novels, which I self-

published and mostly gave away, as I then had money for doing that. This new piece perhaps is more generally accessible. Thanks for considering it, and, even if you don't feel you can use it, for helping to inspire it.

Sloan Bashinsky

[NPR did not respond.]

HE USED TO DRINK MOONSHINE

I WISH TO TELL A STORY ABOUT A WONDERFUL MAN I came to know and love, Clarence W. Allgood. No kidding, that was his real name.

I met Judge when I was still in law school, still reeling from the sudden infant death of my son, and more recently from my father and his father's stunning disapproval of my desire to return to the small south Alabama town, where they had been born and raised, to practice law with a man my father had known growing up, who also had lost a son, and who had offered me a lock-and-key law practice in his own office, use of his secretary, an office, and referring to me the many cases he then was referring to other lawyers, without asking for a dime back from me. I so wanted my father's approval, and his father's too, I suppose, that I was left on what felt like the edge of a great abyss, until a law school professor told me of a federal judge in Birmingham, my home town, who had unexpectedly had his law clerk resign and was looking for a replacement.

I wrote to the judge, got a reply back, asking me to pay him a visit, which I did right away. We mostly talked about fishing and hunting, and not much about lawyering or judging, except Judge told me he tried all the federal criminal cases in the Northern District of Alabama, and handled all appeals from the federal bankruptcy court and all appeals from denial of disability claims from the Social Security Administration, and sat on a few three-judge federal panels in special cases. I would later learn that he had invented and piloted the federal Debtor's Court right there in Birmingham. This court allowed ordinary wage earners to seek court help in consolidating their otherwise unpayable debts, and pay them off on a percentage of face value at a monthly rate they could afford. By taking a referee's commission off each case, Judge made his fortune; but upon writing the Debtor's Court law to be passed by Congress, he put into it that referees would be salaried employees and not work on commission, as he felt the commission method would lead to abuse. From there, he was appointed to the federal bench, not having practiced law a day in his life. It turned out to be a brilliant appointment, as he came to be respected by the entire federal judiciary, as far as I could tell. But there is more about this remarkable man, which had nothing to do with his being a judge, piloting the federal Debtor's Court, or going to night law school in Birmingham before that.

As a lad, Clarence developed a fondness for hopping freight trains. At about age fifteen, he was on a train he had hopped, and as it neared a place in Birmingham he wanted to get off, he jumped as he had done many times for the ground, but something happened and he tripped and his legs fell across the rails and were amputated just above the knees. To the hospital he was rushed, where he then languished in hell's despair,

wanting to die, he told me one day. Then, into his hospital room came a man he had never before seen, and this man began to belittle him for behaving in the way he was behaving. Stunned and outraged, young Clarence told the man he had a hell of a lot of nerve coming in there like that and getting on him about his attitude about losing his legs, when he, the accuser himself, had two legs on which to walk. Whereupon, this man who had come from out of nowhere did a standing two-legged jump up onto Clarence's hospital bed and reached down and raised up his britches legs, and, lo and behold, there were two wooden legs!

In time, Clarence attended Auburn, where he met a young woman named Marie, whom he began to court and found she was high-spirited and he could not boss her around but it seemed she was able sometimes to boss him around, he told me another time. So, he nick-named her "Bully," and he called her that as often as he called her Marie. I swear, Marie was as wonderful as he was, and she taught me how to cook real slow in a barbeque smoker the best leg of lamb I ever ate. I had my first taste of her lamb up at their getaway place in the country, in St. Claire country, on which Judge had had a small lake built and stocked it with blue gill and shell cracker bream, crappie, bass and channel catfish. He nursed them with fish food he threw in the lake the way a farmer might nurse a calf with a milk bottle, whose momma had died. He caught and released, mostly, but sometimes he took enough for Marie's skillet.

Every moonshiner in North Alabama knew Judge, if not from having come before him, then by hearing of him from another moonshiner who had. Judge had a fondness for moonshiners, having once had a taste for the brew himself, but he had to give it up, and drinking altogether, when he developed a digestive disorder, a hiatal hernia. I got the sense that he still missed picking up a jug every now and then, and I knew, because he told me, that he was not happy that his courtroom was used by US Treasury agents to prosecute moonshiners for not paying the federal alcohol stamp tax on their product. If they had bought the stamps, the State of Alabama would find out about it and prosecute them for making moonshine without a state license, which was not available, as no whiskey legally could be made in Alabama. When a local attorney was hired by some moonshiners to try to get the state prohibition laws declared unconstitutional in a three-judge court, on which Judge was to sit, he asked me to try to find some legal authority to support a verdict for the plaintiffs. Alas, I could not, and the case went for the State of Alabama. But nothing really changed, as Judge continued to sentence convicted moonshiners to probation, who then sent him lots of fan mail and some of them, without even being asked by anybody, took it upon themselves to patrol his farm and keep poachers off the place.

Judge had a way of putting convicted criminals into prison (bank robbers, car thieves caught taking cars across state lines, counterfeiters, etc.) that tended to gain their respect and led to him getting a lot of fan mail from them, too. He also got plenty of fan mail from their families. There were a couple of other things about Judge, which were told to me by people who knew him well. One was that he literally ran the Democratic Party in Alabama

behind the scenes. Anybody who wanted to serve as a US Senator or in the House of Representatives, or to be the US Attorney, or the US Marshall, on in the Alabama Legislature, needed to get Judge Allgood's stamp of approval. He was on intimate basis with John Sparkman, Lister Hill and Jim Allen, prominent US Congressmen. The other thing was that Judge was considered a sage, and a lot of important folks came to him in chambers seeking his counsel: lawyers, businessmen, even ministers. I heard ministers brought to Judge the parishioners they could not help, and if they did what Judge recommended, their lives got better.

When it was time for me to leave Judge, I was by then thoroughly mixed up, had contracted a terrible G.I. tract disorder, had lost my confidence, and was committed to go to work for my father's company, which his father and his father's brother-in-law had purchased from a local family just after the war, my father being a junior partner, so to speak, until he eventually learned enough to be ready to run and expand the business himself, at which time he bought out his father and uncle by marriage. Judge tried to talk me out of working for my father, said I could stay another term with him, if I wanted, but I didn't listen and it was a sad thing for both my father and me. When I gave up on that misadventure four years later, my marriage now in tatters, my psyche ready for the State Mental Hospital I often felt, Judge told me to leave Alabama, get my act together somewhere else, then come back. For if people came to believe that I had psychiatric troubles, it would go very badly for me. I ignored that advice, too, went into the practice of law, gutting out the psychic trouble and got somewhat leveled out. But many years later, after a lot of other things had happened, it all caught up with me.

I don't recall Judge ever talking to me about God but one time, which was in 1990, perhaps early 1991, before I fell apart nearly all the way, before I even knew I was going to fall apart nearly all the way. I had occasion to be in Birmingham, and I paid him a visit in chambers. He was glad to see me, wanted to talk. I was expecting something else, as the last time I'd seen him in chambers was when he had told me to leave the state back in 1973. But he must have felt I'd pulled through alright, because I'd practiced law over a decade, before leaving Alabama in 1986, for Santa Fe, New Mexico, trying to find help for my illness, which nothing I'd tried had helped: medicine, psychiatry, natural medicine, meditation, various forms of exercise, including yoga and tai chi, diets, etc. After a year in Santa Fe, I finally begged God to help me, and after that I started having experiences that were not of this world, and they've been going on ever since. It was my telling some folks once about how it all got started in Santa Fe that got me locked up and I thought maybe put away forever in early 1997. But that finality was not to be, even though the going was very rough for a good while after that.

Anyway, this story is about Judge, not about me, except to give some scruffy pedigree for the teller of this yarn that is only now getting to what I believe is the most interesting part, which begins with me in Judge's chambers in 1990. He is very upset about the Eleventh Circuit setting up so many judicial sentencing guidelines that, if followed, render a federal judge into a robot. "But you know me, I figured out a way around it, but not even

you will I tell how I do it!" he says with that crinkly smile I came to love so many years before. But after the smile leaves, I see another look in his eyes, and hear a tone in his voice, and see the tiredness and pain in his body and soul, and his loneliness: his beloved Marie had suddenly died of a stroke ten years or so before, in his arms, and since then he had lived alone. I know he is leaving.

In the meantime, a beautiful commemoration is written and published by legal folks in Birmingham, whose lives Judge has touched as much as he had touched my life. The authors call and interview many people, including past law clerks. I tell the story of the moonshiners, and some other stories I never feel they will publish, but they publish it and I am sort of the one really sticking out there. But Judge seems not to mind but is somewhat pleased by it all, after I write him to say I owe the writers one. Judge's note back says he is getting old and is worried about the state of his soul, because he used to drink moonshine, cusses and doesn't go to church. I write back, addressing him as "Clarence." I've never dared do that before now, because only God, other federal judges and a federal judge's spouse address a federal judge by first name. But something makes me do it, and then I get on him good, say after all the good he has done people, what does he mean by being worried for his soul? When he gets to the Pearly Gates, there is going to be a very large homecoming party thrown, very large. He writes back thanking me; says I always was one of his favorites (of his law clerks). I weep.

I guess it was about a year later that a friend in Birmingham calls to let me know Judge has passed on. I ask when is the funeral? A couple of days off. I say I will get a flight out the next day. I am now living near Denver, Colorado, have been since 1988. When I, by the way, ask my friend if he knows the cause of death, he says that he thinks Judge killed himself with his own .38. I think to myself something like: Just like that tough old bird: his life in the last light, his mate gone, his body giving out, he probably had a lot of physical pain, the Eleventh Circuit was trying to strip his humanity and God-given wisdom out of him, he didn't want to live out his days in a nursing home: like an old Indian brave who knew that his time had come, but who could not fall behind the tribe and let the animals have him to spare them having to look after him, he did it in a modern way.

I weep at his funeral, then go back to Colorado and write an eulogy somewhat like this one, send it to some folks in Birmingham, who had loved Judge, but hear nothing back. I had entitled the piece: JUDGE CLARENCE ALLGOOD: MY SPIRITUAL FATHER. He was a living saint, in my opinion, and in the opinion of a lot of other people, I would wager by the way they revered him. When later I asked it of him, he started coming to me in spirit visions, sometimes, and in dreams, to mentor me in difficult times and in times not difficult. I feel his presence all around me at this time, and I feel more than his presence. I hear angels singing. I see the black woman who raised me as if I were her own, even as she loved and served my white family for twenty-five years in our home, the other living saint I have known in this life. She did go to church, and there is a lot I could write about Sister Charlotte Washington, but I do not sense this is the time to do it. This is the time

to write about Brother Clarence W. Allgood, who used to drink moonshine, cussed and did not attend church.

SHE WORKS BEHIND THE SCENES

I WISH TO TELL A STORY ABOUT A WONDERFUL WOMAN I once knew named Charlotte Washington, who was not, I don't think, a descendant of George Washington, whose name her Negro slave parents or grandparents might have taken as their own.

As I was told it, Charlotte came to our home looking for work while I was in the hospital being born. She was there waiting when my mother and I came home. She would stay there, through two moves to successively larger houses, for twenty-five years, living with us except on Thursday afternoon and Saturday night and Sunday, when she went to visit her other family in Bessemer, which lies about twelve miles westerly of Birmingham, on the road to Tuscaloosa where no Negroes attended college in those days. Except I came not to call her Charlotte, but "Cha" (Sha), as that was about all I could get my mouth around when I was a tot. And as Sloan was a pretty hefty moniker for a tot, I was called "Bash," borrowing the first four letters of my last name, which is Bashinsky. How that came about, Bashinsky, perhaps is a story to be told another time.

Cha called me "Bashlabuttons," and she loved me like I was her own. She loved my parents and my younger brother and sister like they also were her own. And my grandparents and uncles and aunts and cousins, and my friends. She cooked food so delicious, old Southern style cooking, the way the wealthy white folks had long eaten, that I was spoiled for life. Her biskits were a closely guarded secret, that is, how she made them. They weren't big and fluffy but where thin and a bit crunchy, and with a pat of butter and some honey, yummmmmmmm. She cooked greens and peas and beans the old way, with bacon and pork back. She used Crisco to slowly cook fried chicken in a black cast iron skillet; I never yet ate any other that good. She cooked roasts (standing rib, rump, we never had pot roast), ham, leg of lamb, country fried steak (made from cubed sirloin), and stewed and fresh corn and homemade rolls that were to die for. I liked leftovers, and hash from the meats, as much as the first pass at it. Her chocolate pudding and whipped cream, and boiled custard, somewhat rare treats, still linger in my mouth at age almost sixty-two. She must have known the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

Cha also must have known that in my soul I was a fisherman, because she was the one who first taught me how to fish: cane pole, string, cork, spit-shot, safety-pin or small hook, worms or grasshoppers in fresh water, a small piece of shrimp or cut bait in salt water. It may not be stretching it to say she probably liked fishing better than I did, but she didn't get to go much when I knew her, with all the work she was doing for us: cooking, washing and ironing our clothes and bathroom and bedroom linens, and cleaning house. That was the first house, which was small. We had other Negro housekeeping help in the bigger

houses, and to take care of the yards. About all I ever did was mow the grass and sometimes weed out crabgrass, all of which I did my best to get out of doing. Somehow I had gotten the notion that white children did not do yard work. I'd gotten some related notions, too, I'm now ashamed to say.

I don't remember Cha ever preaching the Bible to me, even though she was always listening to Negro religious radio stations while she cooked and ironed, which she seemed to do most of the time except when she was sleeping. She had a schoolmarm way of tilting her head down, looking sort of up at me, hands on hips, or at her sides, saying, "Umh, umh, umh, ain't you shamed!" whenever I did something that even I knew I ought not to do. But usually I acted as if I hadn't done it, while I backed off from doing that I shouldn't be doing. Usually is wasn't all that awful, compared to some of the things I would get into when I wasn't at home, usually on weekend nights, when I was allowed to stay out until about ten o'clock. Then came the misadventures away from home, as I approached manhood, and those that came afterwards. As if Cha, where she now perches, doesn't see it all anyway. She will speak to me about it when I am there with her, and I sure do hope that she will not then threaten to leave and go to Bessemer like she sometimes did when my brother and I really gave each other and her a hard time, when our parents were out for the evening or off on a business trip. I finally got to where I didn't believe Cha, that she would go off to Bessemer and never come back, but she finally did do that, and I'll tell about that later.

In the meantime, there's more to tell about just what a wonderful presence she was in my young life. She was joyous whenever I brought home some bass or bream, but catfish she loved most. She also liked the game I shot, doves, quail, squirrels, rabbits, but would have loved a possum, which I never wanted to hunt. I never shot a deer and am now glad for it, but in those days I would have liked to notch one or two up. Nowadays I'm not even glad I shot anything, but I don't feel too bad about the fish I caught and brought home for Cha; sometimes I got to eat them but usually not, as my family was not into eating fish very much in those days. I can't say I was all that fond of fish either back then, but I sure did like catching them. If I had to do it all over again, I might never get all those increasingly fancy rods and reels, spin casting outfits and then the fly rods. I might just stick with a cane pole, and I just might make a lot of noise about Cha getting to go with me. I'm getting sentimental thinking about that.

It's difficult for me not to get sentimental about Cha. Maybe it's because in my soul I'm half Negro? Maybe I felt invisible kinship with her many children and many more grandchildren and great grandchildren out in Bessemer and down in the country in middle Alabama in a place she called "Eeps," but I later learned it was Epps. My mother told me Cha didn't know how old she really was because the census taker had come around only once every ten years. She might have been ninety-eight instead of somewhere around eight-eight when her heart finally gave out on her out there in her grandchildren's home in Bessemer. But how could I feel such kinship, when I was racially prejudiced against Negroes, didn't think they should ride at the front of buses, drink out of the same

fountains or use the same restrooms, or go to the same schools? Yes, for a brief while I was for George Wallace.

Came the freedom marchers, and fire hoses and police dogs and police with riot sticks and mace and probably tear gas. I was off in another state at a white prep school, getting ready to go to a white college, Vanderbilt, but I didn't know yet I was going there. I was not emotionally involved in what was going on in Birmingham, Selma and Montgomery, but I really was emotionally involved because I was starting to experience mixed feelings. I was sometimes remembering when I once told Cha that I would not eat what she had prepared for the hired help, when I asked about lunch. It was turnip greens, black-eyed peas, corn bread and buttermilk. It was the buttermilk that caused me to say I would not eat nigger food. I can't imagine the black arrow that shot into her heart, but my mother let me know about it pronto, and I felt so bad that I wanted to crawl into a hole and never come out.

I felt just as bad one night some years later, when I was readying to go out and discovered that I didn't have a clean dress shirt to wear and demanded that Cha get me one ready. My shirts were washed but not yet ironed. She stopped what she was doing and fetched one of my shirts out of the ironing basket and started ironing, as I impatiently stood over her and watched. The longer she ironed, the more awful I began to feel. I'd never seen her iron a shirt, or anything, except in passing. I had no clue what was involved in ironing by hand just one long-sleeve cotton dress shirt. I told her I was going out the next day and buy drip-dry shirts, and that's what I still wear to this day.

I don't feel badly, though, about all the attention Cha, and my mother, lavished on me when I would get sick and not feel like even getting out of the bed. I doubt any child ever got better nursing care, even as my father's brother, a pediatrician, came over — Leo made house calls until he retired — to look down my throat, sometimes stick me with needles, and tell them to give me dry toast and jelly and plenty of fluids until I started getting better. Sometimes I delayed getting better by saying I was sort of feeling dizzy, because there was nothing I hated worse than going to grammar school. They saw right through it, even when they let me pretend to be getting away with it, for a day or perhaps two longer than I really needed.

Then was the time when my favorite dog ever, George, a wonderful basset hound my mother had gone to New England to get and bring back on a train, got run over and killed and nobody even stopped. When I came home from school, Cha came to me and grabbed me in her arms and told me. I was so upset I went upstairs and got my .22 rifle and loaded it and made off down the road looking for the bastard that had killed George. But I didn't get really out of my bedroom — the rest of it was in my imagination — because I was so heart-broken that I couldn't hardly move. I cried and moaned and threatened and cried until Cha called Uncle Leo. My mother and father were in Colorado Springs on a business convention, and he read me the riot act, which shut me up, but it didn't stop me from wishing George was still with me. The next basset we got didn't match up to George, but when I was in law school I had one that did, until he got run over, too. That time the car

stopped, after I started yelling after it, but I was so upset over Heathcliff that I didn't really feel like loading my shotgun, but my wife, Dianne, gave him hell.

Cha saw me go through a lot of pretty awful things, but I don't know if it was any different for any other little boy in the big scheme of things. But there was one thing she saw me go through that probably wasn't exactly ordinary. I was not looking like a little boy my senior year in law school at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, after my seven-week-old son died of sudden infant death syndrome. I was a lot number then, than when George had gotten run over. I was so numb I couldn't even cry. When the funeral was over in Birmingham, I headed with Dianne for the car to go back to Tuscaloosa. But before we reached the car, Cha ambled straight to me and even before she reached me I burst in to tears so awful that I couldn't deal with it and I got into the car and somehow drove away. That night, my Uncle Leo, a man I had wanted to be my father because he loved to fish as much as I did, who had taught me some of the modern methods of doing it, called and gave me the dickens. He had no idea how many more times I would cry over the loss of that child, but I imagine Cha sort of knew.

I also will never forget when Cha cornered me and asked me to tell her what was wrong with my mother. "She's got cancer, Cha, she's dying," I said, grabbing her to me. I'd been sworn to secrecy by my mother, I was not to tell anyone who didn't already know. How could I not tell Cha when she asked? I could not not tell her, any more than I could not weep for George or for my son. Or now, maybe because I'm leading up to the parts of this story that I feel are the really important parts of it.

Cha began to decline after my mother died in 1966, more so after my son died the next year. After she went to live with her grandchildren in Bessemer, I remember going by there only once and seeing her in the big bed in the main bedroom in their not very large house, a midget house compared to the one she had left, which was my family's house. She seemed sort of delirious and didn't want me talking about her being sick. I didn't even hug her, I don't think, but I gave her family some money, maybe $20, for medicine, if she needed it; and said to let me know if she needed more. Then I headed back to Tuscaloosa. A couple or so weeks later, I was back up in Birmingham and had just gotten through playing golf at the country club all of my family belonged to, when Dianne came to pick me up and told me Cha had died. I collapsed into her arms, said I didn't think I could take anyone else I loved dying.

We came back to Birmingham a few days later for the funeral at a large Negro Baptist Church in Bessemer. Dianne and I were the only two white people in that packed church. The minister said the congregation welcomed their white brother and sister, surely knowing I was one of Cha's white children, and Dianne, too; she and Cha were very close. Only to Dianne had Cha revealed the biskit recipe, and then very begrudgingly, after I asked her who would cook me biskits after she went to be with God? Then the minister told a story I'd never heard: that "Sister Washington" had from behind the scenes led the civil rights movement in Negro churches, counseling tolerance, patience, loving their

white brothers and sisters, never stepping forward and claiming any public credit for herself.

Then it was over and time for us all to pass by the open casket, where my Cha lay in quiet repose. When I got there beside her, I wanted to jump into the casket, never let her go. At the very least, I wanted to lean over and hug her, kiss her cheek goodbye. But all I did was keep moving, out toward the front of the church where her son, Tom Dew, was already sitting on the front steps, head in hands. Tom had worked for my family around and in the house for many years. He had worked for me in Tuscaloosa. I knew him pretty well. As I sat down beside him, he wailed out, "My momma is dead, Mr. Bash, my momma is dead, what's I gonna do?!!!" He burst into tears. I burst into tears, didn't know what to tell him. I felt embarrassed, crying like that. I stopped it, patted Tom Dew on the shoulder, got up and walked with Dianne down the steps to our car. I still remember crying out when I was a little boy and Cha wasn't nearby and I was hurting about something, "I want my Cha! I want my Cha!"

It would be many years before I saw Cha again, early 1993, actually. She came to me in a stunning spirit vision, the first of a number of such visions. I am not going to describe those visions, which are indelible in my heart and I can tell every last detail if I wish. What I will tell instead is that I became convinced Sister Charlotte Washington is an angel in service to the Holy Spirit, who came to earth to live as a person. She instilled into me something I cannot describe, not so much by talking to me but mostly by simply being. The Holy Spirit has, I believe, been pretty much in charge of my spiritual journey since it consciously began in 1987, which is another story altogether. She has loaned me out to Jesus and angels to instruct, comfort, protect and refine me. But always, at a distance, if not always hands-on, She is behind the scenes, holding me to her breast, loving me, keeping me on this world from which I often have wanted so badly to leave.

Why was I was put into the stewardship of Sister Charlotte Washington, then Judge Clarence W. Allgood, about whom I wrote first when I started this writing the other day? Why was that priceless gift also given to me? Perhaps it is so someday I might write about them, as I knew them, both on this world and from heaven after they left this world. Perhaps there are other reasons I do not yet know and have not yet been told, that these two angels came down to walk among men and women, and were men and women. Perhaps it is that we are all angels, which we forget when we come to earth, and it takes the Holy Spirit using angels like Judge Clarence Allgood and Sister Charlotte Washington, working behind the scenes, to remind us of just who and what we all really are.

[*I did eventually meet and get to know somewhat one other living saint – Dorothy Sherman, who started and ran the soup kitchen in Key West*.]

HE CALLED A SPADE A SPADE

I WISH TO TELL YOU OF MY FATHER'S OLDER BROTHER, who, when he and I first met, had just finished his residency at Duke Medical School. It was back when he entered his freshman year of medicine there that Leo's family and medical school professors discovered he was a genius. He was also the greatest fisherman in the world, as far as I was concerned later in my young life. But for now, not even six years old, I was simply in awe of a six-foot-four giant, weighing about two-hundred-forty pounds, whose hands looked to be about the size of Goose Tatum's of the Harlem Globetrotters, who could palm a basketball and a cabbage in one hand, I supposed when I saw him play in Birmingham a few years after I met Leo. I actually would see Leo palm my youngest daughter, Alice, by her bare butt and lift her high above my head squirming sort of like a baby seal when she was just home from the hospital being born, and say in his gruff laughing way, "Now that's a fine baby!

Leo was blessed with an inheritance that allowed him to practice medicine in whatever way he wished. He had patients from over the mountain, Mountain Brook and Crestline Heights, two burgs south of Birmingham where mostly rich folks would eventually congregate, or people wanting to be rich folks. That's where I grew up, and my friends. Leo and my father grew up on the Birmingham side of the mountain, in Forest Park, when that was where the rich folks lived, or folks wanting to be rich. By the time Leo got out of Duke and came home to be my and a lot of other babies and kids' doctor, the migration over the mountain was getting pretty well underway.

Actually, Red Mountain wasn't really a mountain but was merely a ridge at the tail end of the Appalachian range, where once industrialists had mined iron ore, coal and limestone to make steel in Birmingham mills. The mills closed one by one after the raw materials ran out and it became cheaper to make steel elsewhere, than to ship the raw materials from Mobile up the Warrior River to Birmingham. But long before that demise, a very large cast- iron statue of a scantily-clad Blacksmith named Vulcan was given to Birmingham by some place or folks I don't now remember, and it was erected on top of Red Mountain, over the cut where 20th Street went over the top and down into Homewood, which lay just west of Mountain Brook.

To my little boy eyes, the first time I saw Leo and heard him bellow about scarlet fever and how it and whooping cough were primary killers of children, he looked about as big as Vulcan and made about as much noise as I thought Vulcan might make if he could really talk, and I sort of wanted to migrate somewhere . . . else. For I'd already had my taste of penicillin from another doctor, when my younger brother was nearly dead from

pneumonia, while Leo was still studying to be a doctor. I was burning up with something trying to eat me alive from inside out, and they gave me the shots, too, only to later learn I had the world record case of the red measles. My brother and I didn't cross-pollinate and kill each other, and we both lived to have Leo come around from time to time when we were sickly and eyeball us and pretty well size up the situation before he even felt our throat and neck for lumps and made us stick out our tongues and get that awful wooden flat gag stick in our throat and "ahhhhhhh" shit would have been how we really felt about it if we were old enough to know such words.

I remember one day Leo came calling when I was home sick with something he figured a needle would take care of and my mother was not there but my mammy Cha was, and I decided no way was he going to stick that needle into me and I fought him tooth and nail, really a great plan, him weighing about four times what I weighed; but it was more tussle than he or I realized I had in me, and finally he nearly had to hog-tie me and was huffing and cussing, a leg over me, an arm sort of around my waist, or maybe it was my neck, when he injected me and, yep, I thought it was going to hurt like that: it was penicillin after all, if it hurt like that. But I started getting better pretty quick, maybe because I got so hot and bothered that the sudden fever of it killed off whatever it was in me that had summoned Leo to poke that needle in me in the first place, or maybe it was just the desire for him not to come back and do it again that caused me to get better.

Leo gave up on doctoring me when I was about twenty and had contracted some sort of deadly dysentery while running a summer vacation route for my father's potato chip company, Golden Flake, but I didn't yet know I had contracted some sort of deadly dysentery because the runs hadn't yet started. I was so tired that I could barely move and felt nearly dead when Leo got there, called in by my mother from a party of some kind, accompanied by another doctor I'd heard a lot about, named Keehn Berry. I'd been wanting to meet Keehn because I'd heard from Leo that he was a great fisherman, but not under such circumstances as these. I suppose Leo had ESP'd it from afar at the party, I wouldn't put it past him; or maybe he just figured this was the last time he wanted to be called at night to come see me, one of his oldest patients. He would make house calls until the day he retired, for babies and children.

Anyway, neither Keehn nor Leo had yet figured out what was wrong with me by the time they headed back to the party. The figuring out would take my throwing up and crapping all over everywhere for the rest of the night, and then for Keehn to see the wretching remains of me in his office the next morning, which was Saturday, they still worked on Saturdays in that time, for him to announce that I had dysentery and was headed for the hospital without passing Go. Shigella was the bacteria breed they assayed in the lab, and tetracycline, as I recall, was the killer drug they used on it. I was in there nearly ten days, barely able to even move until the very end of it. Keehn was an internist and taught medicine at the nearby University of Alabama Medical School. A doctor's doctor, Leo had called him. Leo never got to treat doctors, but if he had, he would have been called that, too, I imagine.

Well, I say Leo never got to treat doctors. Who knows what he and other doctors talked about privately? Or at the Birmingham Country Club, where Leo loved to play cards: gin rummy, hearts, bridge, as he chain-smoked. I always thought the cigarettes would get him, and maybe they somehow did, but that is not what I want to talk about in this moment. I want to tell a story I heard from perhaps the greatest plaintiff's lawyer the Alabama Bar ever produced, at least up to this man's departure from this world. Francis Hare told me that Leo was the greatest doctor who had ever lived, and while I already knew this might be so, I wanted to hear Francis' reasoning. It was because he had said to Leo, over a card game one afternoon, I think this was in the 19th Hole, that he had been having headaches for years and had never been able to get much relief. Leo reached out a giant paw and took off Francis' glasses and bent the stems a bit wider and put them back onto Frances' nose and said, "How's that?

Then was the time my oldest daughter, Nelle, was outside playing with neighborhood friends, and all of a sudden there was this great yelling and shrieking and in she came holding her right arm, dislocated at the elbow from some other kid swinging her around in the air holding onto her wrist. I called Leo at home, I believe it was a weekend day, and he was there in about ten minutes. Not exactly how Nelle had hoped would be the way her day went, as she also had a close association between Leo and the needle, and as he still was about as big as a grizzly bear, Nelle was not in the least disposed to him ever getting his mitts on her again. But Leo was not a bit concerned about how any child felt about him; as far as I could tell, he was only concerned about them getting well, if they were feeling poorly. He picked Nelle right up from behind, sat down in a straight-back chair with her in his lap, her little back to his giant torso, and did some sort of manipulation on her right arm, bringing her hand and forearm up to her chest and then twisting it a bit inward, I suppose. When he then asked if that didn't feel better, the grateful look on Nelle's face said she would always be glad to see Dr. Leo after that.

The only time Leo did not treat Nelle for pediatric stuff was one time he was out of town and another doctor had to cover for him and I ended up taking Nelle away from that doctor and to Children's Hospital, and the residents agreed with me that she indeed had pneumonia and they took over until Leo got back and took over, and she got better. There was one other time, not pediatric, when at age five Nelle got run over on her bicycle and nearly lost her left foot above the Achilles, and an orthopedic surgeon saved her leg. Leo said we were darn lucky Dr. David Vesley was on call that day at the hospital. I don't say that to flack other doctors, only to say what Leo said.

I mentioned in another of these little vignettes that I once had wanted Leo to be my father because he loved to fish as much as I did. Leo's two sons didn't care all that much about fishing, and many years later Leo told Rick Ruoff, a Florida Keys fishing guide friend of mine, to whom I had introduced Leo, that I should have been his son. We really did spend some close time together, bonded pretty tight, but after I went through a lot of changes, it wasn't so tight outwardly, but inwardly I still feel much the same about that gruff old bear of a man. Maybe that's where I got some of my gruffness; maybe that's why

not long ago I was told in a dream Leo had died. Twice in that same night I was told that. But then, maybe it was because he was no longer my doctor even in spirit ways, which he had done some of over the past couple of years in my dreams, to help me see things a bit differently when I was in tight places. That man sure could see, and I wonder if it will be okay to tell some stories about how well he really could see? I'll test those waters, to see how the angels who monitor me 24-7 feel as I ease into it. They have their ways of letting me know.

I believe a good place to start is a morning I chanced into Leo and his second son, Bo, also a pediatrician, at a local breakfast place one morning. After being in private practice for a few years, Bo had recently gone to work for an HMO and was feeling a great weight had lifted off him. Bo always was a more business-like doctor than had been his father, many of whose patients were from poor black, Italian, Greek and Lebanese families, who often paid Leo's doctor bills in fresh vegetables, home-baked bread, pies and cakes, and so forth. Leo made house calls in those families' homes too. Some of the mothers, especially those living over the mountain, took not to liking Leo because he was wont to tell them he was into treating babies and not mommas, and for the nervous mommas to sit down and be quiet while he examined and figured out what was wrong with the patients, that is, the babies. Sometimes he told mommas a lot sterner stuff than that: like it was their own over-heatedness that was playing out in their babies. And once I heard him tell a momma on the telephone that she had a lot of gall calling him on Sunday afternoon about her child's fever, after it had started the preceding Wednesday, and it was because of people like her that he was retiring from the practice of medicine. Then, as he figured something really was wrong with this child, he told her to meet him with the child at the hospital. Later, Leo's wife, Betty told me that the real reason Leo had retired was because he had contracted encephalitis and it had affected his memory and he was forgetting things like who was still sick, when he was supposed to see them, and so forth. So, he took himself out of the calling to which he had dedicated his life.

This morning over breakfast, Bo wants to talk about a new drug on the market that reduces fever in children and makes mommas happy and his life easier. I, now being a somewhat self-appointed expert on various forms of disease and wellness, pipe up that I think fever is what kills infections, and so why take a pill for it unless the fever is really high and putting a child at risk? As I smugly wait for Leo to nod approval, he says softly, "It's babies who couldn't make a fever that worried me." Thus ended the lesson for that day from the master who now has Alzheimer's, which breaks my heart but I suppose he doesn't suffer too much from it. Last time Leo and I had a frank talk, which was before he knew of the Alzheimer's, he said he was waiting on the Lord to take him. Why the Lord has now waited so darn long, I don't know, but I sure do hope the Lord doesn't wait much longer, even though Leo is a lot like Noah in that wonderful movie, the name of which I can't now remember [The Notebook], but Noah's wife was named Allie, and she got Alzheimer's and he moved into the nursing home with her and looked after her.

Despite being a giant, Leo was a great dancer, talked women off their feet, made them laugh, flattered them, romanced them, but never beyond play-pretend. He once told me a story, I was about twelve, as a shapely red-head crossed in front of the car he and another man and I were in, during a fishing trip for speckled trout in Pensacola Bay. The fishing was awful and the woman was striking, and the other man and Leo were both gawking, even as Leo said that once he had done something he ought not to have done and Miss Betty had told him that if he ever did that again she would wait until he was asleep one night and would get a big rusty knife out of the kitchen and slit his throat, and she really meant it, too, he said. I wonder if it really was his throat that Betty told him she would slit. I know her well enough to wonder that.

One time I got involved in doing some legal work for them, the subject matter of which I'll not get into other than to say and I was doing it for nothing, just as Leo had treated me and my brother and sister and my children for nothing; and I was doing it because I loved Leo and Betty. But eventually I let the situation get away from me; I was far too close to it, to be detached and professional, and I had to tell them to seek help from their regular lawyers and that took a while and some money but it worked out okay in the end, I hope. It would have worked out a lot better if they'd had the other lawyers to begin with, because the other lawyers would not have let them even get involved with what I let them get involved in. Betty was the leader, Leo was following, and I was tagging along, and it was during the darkest hour of it all that I heard Leo say things to Betty about how he would see it to the end, protect her interests, and he told me that he loved her (and for me to lay off her).

I have written to Leo and Betty that I do not wish to attend any funeral but would love to throw a party for whoever goes to the other side, and the one left behind and all the relatives and friends will be welcome at wherever I throw the party. Leo himself never was much for funerals: he told me he was glad his father, suffering a long time from leukemia, had finally crossed over and was now out of pain. I never heard Leo express concern about the state of his own soul, nor did I ever hear him talk about the state of anyone else's. If he liked something, he complimented it. If he didn't like something, he said so. He seemed, when I heard him speak of the Bible, to enjoy the Old Testament more than the New. He was one-quarter Jew, through is father and paternal grandfather. Like Old Testament men of God, he called a spade a spade, and some people didn't like that.

[Leo finally crossed over in 2006, and I stayed in the Florida Keys and wrote an eulogy which left my heart heaving.]

HE WAS A NOBLE CREATION

I WISH TO TELL YOU ABOUT A MAN I NEVER PERSONALLY MET, as he died a few years before I was born. His name was, I hope this spelling is correct, Leopold Baczynsky, which he much later changed the spelling of to Bashinsky, to make it phonetically pronounceable in English, and also easier to spell, I would imagine. What I tell here was told to me by his relatives, in bits and pieces.

When he was fifteen, Leopold's father took his third wife, who also was fifteen. Leopold's mother and first stepmother had both died, thus the third marriage. However, being the same age as his new stepmother, Leopold decided to strike out on his own, to America. He came from Poland by ship, and came in through either the Charleston (or was it Savannah?) harbor, where he had a relative, who then helped him to move eastward to the Alabama-Georgia line, to where there was another relative. After hanging out there for a while, Leopold migrated further eastward to Troy, Alabama, where he found employment with a Mr. Frederick Fox Henderson, I believe was the gentleman's name, as his son and grandson bore the same name, I knowing the great grandson eventually.

Mr. Henderson owned a mercantile store and Leopold started out stocking shelves and sweeping the place out in the evenings. This went on for a while, even as Leopold learned the business from the bottom up and eventually, perhaps in his early twenties, was managing the entire business. The business prospered under Leopold's stewardship, and one day he went to Mr. Henderson and said he thought they should open a bank. Well, Mr. Henderson said he didn't know anything about banks. Leopold said, well, they were already pretty much a bank, loaning out three dollars to a lot of folks on Fridays, and they would bring back four dollars the next Friday. There couldn't be much more to it than that, Leopold opined. And he knew where there was banking school, lasted six months, up in St. Louis, I believe it was, although another relative said the school was in Montgomery. So, Mr. Henderson sent Leopold to the banking school.

In three months, Leopold was back, having completed the school, and he opened the bank. Mr. Henderson told Leopold that he wanted him to be the president, but Leopold said, no, it was Mr. Henderson's bank and he would be the president and he, Leopold, would be the vice-president and run it for Mr. Henderson. That's what happened, as I myself once saw a dollar bill on that bank signed by Leopold as "v-president." And that's when Leopold's real gifts began to come forth. For the townspeople found he was honest and they came to trust his judgment. In time, Leopold became the town mediator and arbitrator. Folks who had disagreements went together to see him, having agreed in

advance that whatever he said would be fair, they would abide by it. The town lawyers were nearly put to just writing up wills and contracts and deeds.

Then came the troubles on the horizon that Leopold saw in the late 1920s could cause banks and a lot of folks serious trouble. He traveled to banks in nearby counties and got those bankers to agree, if one of their banks had a run on it, the other banks would come to that bank's aid. That way, they might all be able to stay open and in business. But as fate had it, the first run, of sorts, came to Henderson Bank, when a wealthy farmer and landowner came into town one day and into the bank and right there in the lobby loudly bellowed out that he wanted all his money because he didn't trust this or any other bank! There were a few local citizens in the bank, and the ears were listening and the tongues set on ready to wag, which Leopold knew when he came out of his office and greeted his biggest customer and depositor and told him, no problem, he would get his money but it would take a little while to count it all out. Did he have other errands to run in town? Yes, the man said. Could he go off and do that and come back in about an hour, and then pick up his money? Sure, the man said.

An hour later, the man returned to a bank now surrounded by most of the people in Troy, who had come to see what was going to happen. Many of them also were depositors in Henderson Bank. And then before them, through the front door onto the marble steps leading up to the bank, came Leopold carrying two large leather money bags, the kind you see in stage coach and bank robberies in old western movies, I imagine, and dropped them at the feet of the wealthy farmer and said, "There's all your money, in gold. Do you wish to count it?" The jingle and jangle left no doubt in anyone there's mind that there really was a lot of gold coin in those two bags.

The wealthy farmer's mind was one of those minds, as he already was thinking that maybe this was not such a good idea after all, him hauling all that gold back to his farm, with everyone there knowing he was hauling all of that gold back to his farm, to be put somewhere that somebody might decide to come looking for it and take it somewhere that nobody would ever think to look for or find it. So the wealthy farmer said he didn't want gold but wanted paper money instead. Now, that's not going to work, Leopold said, because this and all other banks issue our own paper money, which is how it was done back in those days, and they backed it with gold that was deposited. This depositor had just stripped the Henderson Bank of all its gold reserves, but Leopold had not mentioned that, not wanting to create a riot and stampede.

Cool-handed as Luke, whom Leopold would never get to know, as he died in 1940, I think it was, Leopold told the wealthy farmer, if he did not trust the Henderson Bank, he could not trust the Henderson Bank's paper money. So please take the gold and go. Well, now, the wealthy farmer suddenly really did have himself a predicament, didn't he? And he tried to get out of it by offering the gold back to Leopold, who politely declined to take it back. Now that really set the wealthy farmer to squirming in his boots, and maybe he was squirming in other ways too. He now is begging Leopold to take the gold back, and Leopold is politely declining, and finally the poor man, defeated, leaves on his wagon with

his gold. But he does not give up, as he comes back every day trying to get Leopold to take the gold back, and every day Leopold politely declines, and, of course, nobody else is asking for their money to be given back in gold. And when he senses it is time, Leopold finally does relent and takes back the wealthy farmer's gold, and it may have been said to me that Henderson Bank was the only bank in Alabama that did not go bust during the ensuing Great Depression. Not bad for a Pollock, but then, Leopold was a Jew.

At that time, probably the only Jew inside a fifty-mile radius, even though his brother, Max, or maybe Max was a cousin, would eventually come to Troy. I'm a big foggy about Max, as he seems not to have been spoken of much when I was listening. But I did hear that Leopold learned one day that a woman in town had called off her engagement to a man from out of state, and Leopold went calling and asked if he could court her and she agreed to it. Her father had fought in the Great Waw, that is, the Waw Between the States, that is sometimes called the Waw of Northern Aggression, but never the Civil War. Never the Civil War. Many years later, as I sat at her big dining room table one Sunday dinner (noon meal), eating fried chicken, cooked and served by a Negro servant, my great grandmother Elizabeth Burford Bashinsky asked me, "Sloan (nobody but her called me Sloan, my nickname was "Bash"), do you know why southern people eat our friend chicken with our fingas?" "No, Grandmother," I said, not having ever given it a moment's thought that there might be yet another way to eat fried chicken. "It's because the God-damn Yankees came down here and stole all our silverware and then we didn't have anything to eat our fried chicken with but our fingas!" Maybe that's when I understood why she was carving her fried chicken up with a knife and fork, which I viewed as about as bad as the Yankees coming down and stealing the silver to begin with. Meaning, I still eat my fried chicken with my fingas.

Well, it turned out Elizabeth's Baptist family were a bit relieved that she wanted to marry Leopold, because she was about thirty by now and they were ascair't maybe she wuz gonna ends up a spinst'r en not gib dem no gran' babies, even iffen's dey did knos sumtin' bout birthin' babies. And three children they had together, my grandfather, Leo, and two daughters, Mary Elizabeth and Helen. Mary Elizabeth would come to be called Mary Eve, or just Mary E, and she would marry a wonderful man from Montgomery, I believe he was from there, named Noble Crump. They lived in Montgomery and had their three children there, Elizabeth, Jane and Helen, actually a generation older than I, thus second cousins, I think it is; but I call them my aunts to get their goats, as Helen, at least, is a couple of years junior to me.

The Crumps were the major source of much of this tale telling about Leopold, such as him going Sundays to the Baptist Church on College Street in Troy, where Leopold and Elizabeth had built their somewhat antebellum looking home, with marble steps leading up to the great white pillars; just imagine how that would have impressed the folks back home in Poland. Leopold was said to sit in the back pew, listening to the service, but it was not said that he converted. What was said, however, was when it came time for their children to start receiving their own religious training, Elizabeth asked Leopold about his

sentiments and he said he thought they should be raised Christian, and that's what happened. Today, there is little talk in my family about our Jewish heritage. For all I know, I'm the only one who perhaps hangs any stock in it. How could I not hang stock in a bloodline from someone like Leopold, who sometimes comes to me and advises me how to deal with stuff?

The great tragedy came when Helen, Leopold and Elizabeth's third daughter, Helen, married a wonderful man, Cyrus Case, but not too long later she contracted a virulent pneumonia, or perhaps it was tuberculosis, and perished very quickly. The entire family was struck something awful in the heart, and Leopold's wife, Elizabeth, declared a year of mourning for the family, she and her daughter dressing in black, not going anywhere except for the absolute necessary things, and church. But before the year was out, Leopold could take no more and he grabbed up the entire family and took them on a ship to Europe, to break the spell. I don't know if the spell was broken completely, probably wasn't. I lost my first child and only son suddenly, in 1967, and that spell isn't completely broken yet, and it's 2004. I may write about that another time, but for now, I wish to finish telling you about Leopold.

Actually, there isn't all that much more to tell, except when I went to his wife's funeral in Troy in March 1968, she was perhaps one hundred and four years old. I was then planning to move to Troy to practice law with a highly respected Alabama lawyer, Pi Brantley, with whom my father and grown up in Troy, before his father, Leo, Leopold's son, had decided to move to Birmingham. That migration, too, might another story be. Here, though, I'll only say that my own migration back to Troy all fell though at the funeral, when my father and grandfather got very upset with Pi and me for what I was about to do. But because of that, I would soon meet another noble man, Judge Clarence W. Allgood, and become his law clerk, about which I have already scribbled down a few words.

It was there, at graveside, that I saw Leopold's grave stone, on which an epitaph had been inscribed, by his wife, I would later learn: "God's noblest creation is an honest man."

As I sit here sort of dumbstruck, I'm wondering if Leopold had something to do with my meeting Clarence? Wouldn't put it past them.

HE WAS A PARISH PRIEST

I WISH TO TELL YOU TODAY ABOUT AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST who came into our burg south of Birmingham, Alabama when I was about eleven years old, which would make it sometime around 1953. I don't know where Lee Graham came from, or even if he'd had another church before that. Even then, he did not have exactly what folks in those days would call a church. What he had was an old farmhouse on the edge of Crestline Village's "business" district, where the city library now stands across the side street from City Hall and the Police and Fire Departments. Sometimes friends of mine and I used the crawl space under that old farm house to hide after we had set off a big string of firecrackers beside the fire and police stations, to watch the firemen and policemen come out and just stand there watching what none of them were about to do anything about but let it run its course.

Anyway, I remember going to this old farm house one Sunday with my mother, who, as I recall, said she was very impressed with this young minister who had come into our community. I don't remember anything about the service, and never would remember much about the services at that age, as I had been raised Baptist and was attending only Sunday school, which I enjoyed because we talked about stuff I seemed to understand. I only think I went to one or two church services at Mountain Brook Baptist Church on Montevallo Road, a couple of blocks from where we lived in our second house. I didn't like those services either. I don't know how it was for other boys, but this boy didn't like sermons and church announcements, and he didn't even like the singing all that much either.

My mother was so taken by Lee Graham that she finally decided to switch her membership from the Baptist Church to St. Luke's, which was what Lee called his little farm house church. I don't know what he was doing, but I know it wasn't long before that little farm house wasn't big enough and they moved the whole kit n' kabuddle over to what I believe had been another church on Church Street, which was and still is the street that runs through the middle of the Crestline Village's business district. It was about then that my mother switched my own church membership to St. Luke's, and while already the protests from the family and the Baptist Church were pretty strong and loud, as I recall, they now got a whole lot stronger and louder. Yet my mother was determined to hold her course, and that's how she, my younger brother and sister and I became Episcopalians, even though in my heart I suppose I am still at least half Baptist, because I still like Sunday School. [Later, I got over liking Sunday School.]

I don't know if Lee still is on this world, somewhere down near Tallahassee. That's where he went after he told my mother, she told me, that he had achieved his purpose at St. Luke's. I wasn't directly privy to any of what I'm about to say, as it all was told to me by my mother, who was devoted to Lee and St. Luke's, served faithfully on the Altar Guild and even was in charge of it one year, as I recall. I always felt it was her hope that I would become an Acolyte, which I steadfastly refused to do, perhaps because I had not wanted to be confirmed in the first place. I had wanted to be playing baseball and going fishing those spring Saturday afternoons of my twelfth year, instead of learning the Ten Commandments, liturgies and catechisms. I have also suspected that my mother wanted me to be an Episcopal priest. Regardless of whether any of that is true, I know it really bothered her that I stopped expressing any interest in church for many years, and that I was not much of a church-goer when she passed away when I was twenty-three, during my second year in law school. Even so, maybe she got more done back then than she had believed, because the few stories I'm now about to tell about Lee Graham, which she told to me, left an indelible mark deep in my heart.

The first story was about the time of year, my Mom said, when all Episcopal priests were required by the Diocese to preach a sermon on tithing to the Church. Mom said Lee hated more than anything preaching that sermon, and when he preached it, I heard him say he didn't like doing it. It was the only thing I remember about any sermon he preached. I would conjecture, as it seems unlikely that there could be any other reason for it: Lee felt if he did God's work, then God would provide the money to support it. Shoot, tears just came to my eyes. St. Luke's congregation was generously supporting their church, because, I would again conjecture, they felt their pastor was feeding their souls. And darn, there go some more tears trying to come out of my eyes. In fact, they got to be so many people in the congregation, and some of them were somewhat wealthy, it being a part of Mountain Brook, that they built a much larger church down the other side the hill from where Montevallo Road crosses Church Street just above Crestline Height's Elementary School, where I went for eight years. Across Montevallo, Church Street becomes Montrose Road, and down about a half mile, at the curve at the bottom of a ridge, is where the new church, a rather big church, was built and still stood last time I was by there in 1999. I believe it was around this time that my mother started telling me that she thought Lee Graham would be the next Bishop of the Alabama Diocese.

It wasn't all that long after the new big church was built that the freedom marches and sit-in's began, and Negroes started just showing up at some white churches for Sunday service. St. Luke's congregation was all white. Most of the Vestrymen had started out, I suppose, over at the old farm house, and had walked a lot of miles with Lee. The question arose during a Vestry meeting about what St. Luke's would do if Negroes came on Sunday to attend church? Lee was there observing. It was finally agreed they would hire off-duty Mountain Brook police officers to stand out front and turn away any Negroes who came for Sunday service. That agreed, they were about to adjourn, my mother said to me, when Lee asked the Vestry if they were interested in his thoughts on

the matter? Well, er, yeah, perhaps they should hear his thoughts on the matter. Well, he said his thoughts on the matter where he had built this church up from scratch, he had put his life and soul into it, and if they did not let Negroes come into St. Luke's and worship, then he would close the church and resign as their minister. Darn, there are some more of those tears trying to get aloose from my eyes. So, the Vestrymen backed off from what they had just agreed to do. As it turned out, no Negroes I ever heard of came to St. Luke's. Even so, a deep rift had occurred, and it wasn't all that long, maybe a couple of years, before my mother told me Lee had told her he had accomplished what he had set out to do and was taking a small parish near Tallahassee.

My mother passes away, cancer takes her not all that long, as time goes, after Lee went to Tallahassee. My father has Lee flown up to Birmingham, to do the graveside service. I don't remember a word Lee says, as I am numb and wondering what is wrong with me that I cannot even cry for my own mother's passing? The truth, I think, I was upset with her, but I didn't yet know I was upset with her. It all seemed such a waste: she was only forty-five, I think it was, when she left us. She had more friends than you could shake a stick at. All my own friends and my brother and sister's friends viewed her as their own special friend. They are terribly upset over her passing; shocked might be a better word. Yet there I sit in the family row at gave side, as Lee says last words I will never remember about my mother. He doesn't smile, nor do I recall ever having seen him smile. As he comes down through the family, shaking hands with my father and brother, hugging my sister, I am looking down, preoccupied with what I cannot comprehend. So he passes me by, saying nothing, perhaps the strongest thing he can ever say to me. Well, here come some more tears.

I can't say it, except through conjecture, but I wonder if Lee had sensed for some time that he really wasn't cut out to have a big congregation, if perhaps he was really a simple parish priest, who didn't have to deal with high finances and politics, and was supported by a small congregation, and the Diocese when extra fiscal help was required? Why do tears keep coming to my eyes, as I write about this man I hardly knew? Why do I only really feel home in an Episcopal nave, while in other churches I feel like I am merely a visitor? Why do I miss the old Episcopal Liturgy and not feel much of anything when the new Liturgy is used? Why do I suddenly feel Lee has been with me in spirit ever since I first laid eyes on him and he stared right into my soul?

Maybe I have answered the question so many people once asked about why my mother left the Baptist Church to go to church in an old farmhouse in Crestline Village. Maybe I have answered the question of why I feel the strong presence of God anytime I attend an Episcopal service, and usually have a sort of special private service that parallels the one it seems everyone else is having. Maybe I have answered the question of why I have a sort of private service even when I go into an Episcopal Church during off hours and just sit there quietly until something happens. Maybe Lee Graham is there, waiting on me. Maybe those were Jesus' eyes staring through him at me, causing these tears to keeping trying to get out of me.

WHAT YOU SAW WAS WHAT YOU GOT

I WISH TO TELL YOU TODAY ABOUT A LAWYER who represented my family for many years. It was said John Gillon just showed up one day in Birmingham, Alabama, at the law firm where Frank Spain was practicing law. Frank had grown up in Troy, Alabama, with my Grandfather Leo Bashinsky and a kid named Frank Samford, who one day would buy a small life insurance company out of receivership up in Pennsylvania, I think it was, and move that firm to Birmingham.

I don't know whether that was before or after John Gillon talked Frank Spain into giving him office space and use of the law firm's library, in return for his doing some legal work for the firm. But what do know is, eventually, John became a senior partner in the firm and it represented Liberty National Life Insurance Company through its meteoric rise in value under Frank Samford's stewardship. Today, Liberty National is a wholly owned subsidiary of Torchmark Corporation, which, I believe, still has the best earnings record of any company listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Its common stock is the foundation of my family's wealth.

John Gillon eventually was invited to become a member of the law firm. The way the story went, Frank Spain and another partner, perhaps it was Hobart Grooms, who later would become a United States District Judge in Birmingham, were discussing a case in the hallway of the law firm. Apparently, there was some legal issue they did not have an answer for. In that moment, a voice wafted from out of what lawyers call "the stacks," which are the long, tall shelves of law books found in law firms and law school libraries. The voice said something like, "I believe you can find the answer to that question in . . ." Now, not only did the voice name the case, say it was Johnson v. Baker. The voice also gave the legal reporter in which the case could be found, and the precise volume and page number, say,15 Alabama Reports 237. That's precisely where Frank Spain and the other lawyer found the answer to the legal question they were discussing. I doubt John Gillon forgot anything he ever read or heard spoken, and he read and heard a lot. For him, the law was a life calling, his jealous mistress.

I have written elsewhere that my first child and only son died of sudden infant death syndrome in 1967, during my senior year in law school. One of the things that happened during the aftermath, which I also wrote earlier, was that I lucked into what sure seemed to me and a few other people like a sweetheart deal with a well-respected lawyer in Troy, where my Bashinsky ancestors lived before my Grandfather Bashinsky moved his family to Birmingham in the 1920s, I think it was. My grandfather and father were not in favor of my Troy plans, and, in an effort to help me see more clearly, my father suggested I visit

with John Gillon, who had grown up in a small town, and see what he might have to say about living in a small town.

That seemed like good advice, so a few days later I went to Spain-Gillon's offices in the John Hand Building on the corner of 20th Street and 1st Avenue North. The John Hand Building used to be the main office of what then was First National Bank of Birmingham, which today is known as AmSouth Bank. John Hand had either been the original founder of the bank, or pretty close to it. This was the bank that enjoyed the Bashinskys' banking business, it was the trustee under the various trusts John Gillon had drawn up for the benefit of my Grandfather Bashinsky's grandchildren and great grandchildren, and some day it would administer the estates of my Grandfather Bashinsky and his wife, Cora, after they left this world. And I believe Spain-Gillon then did some legal work for First National.

John suggested we go into the library to chat. Perhaps it was all set up, perhaps it just happened, but suddenly most of the lawyers in the firm were sitting around that long library table with John and me. I knew them, more or less, and two of them had been in my law school class at Alabama. John pulled out his pipe, stuffed in some tobacco, and lit and puffed it, before looking at me with those steely, twinkly eyes and saying, "I understand you want to practice law in a small town?" I said that was my plan. His next remark was, "Do you know what it's like to live in a small town?" I said I did not, as I'd never lived in one. (I do now). "Well, he said, with a now mischievous grin, "All you have to do is go out to the golf course on Saturday night and drive around it to find out who's fucking whose wife."

Now you probably don't know, because I probably haven't said it straight out yet, but the death of our son had caused some difficulties between my wife and me, and it was a flat out truth that I was actively entertaining my getting to know some of the women in Troy on an intimate basis after I got there. John stared into my eyes, as if he knew just what I was thinking about, and not another word was said by him, or by me. However, there is something else you probably don't know, because I probably haven't said it yet either. John was a dedicated Christian, Bible scholar and churchman. For him to say something like that to anyone was a bit beyond the pale, I certainly thought in that moment. But perhaps I didn't know him yet, and perhaps even his law firm were as taken by surprise as I, but not for the same reasons, as I sure as hell wasn't letting on that I'd just had my hide nailed to a barn door. But what happened was, the entire lot of them burst out into riotous laughter, as if it was the funniest thing they had ever heard said.

Maybe it was later that same day when I asked John privately if Spain-Gillon had an opening for a lawyer fresh out of law school. He said he would check with the firm and get back to me, but when he called a few days later, it was to say they were not then looking for a new lawyer. So, I was left sitting between Troy and nowhere in particular law firm, until a law professor told me about a federal judge in Birmingham having just had his law clerk resign unexpectedly. As I already wrote to begin this series of stories, that is how I came to know Judge Clarence W. Allgood, one of the three United States District Judges

in Birmingham. Hobart Grooms was another one, and Seybourne Lynne was the third. They all three seemed to take me under their wing, even as about two or three weeks into my appointment with Judge Allgood, John Gillon called me on the telephone in my law clerk office and said something had changed and now Spain-Gillon needed another lawyer, and was I interested? I was tempted, but I'd only just gotten started with Judge Allgood, he'd already suddenly lost a law clerk just before me, and I declined the offer. It was a few years before I wondered to myself if my grandfather and father might not have had something to do with something changing in Spain-Gillon: like maybe one or both of them suggested to John Gillon maybe the law firm might consider hiring me on. It was a fact Spain-Gillon not only handled all the Bashinskys' personal legal work, they also represented my father's company. Golden Flake might then have been the firm's largest client.

One of Spain-Gillon's young lawyers at that time, John McKleroy, had been in my law school class, and some years later would be in my tax law school class. Between his two stints in law school, John McKleroy was trained by John Gillon. That training probably began in earnest after my father decided that he wanted to take Golden Flake public around 1970. Spain-Gillon had never handled a public offering, but said it wanted to do it. After my father agreed, John Gillon gave it to John McKleroy, who surely started from scratch, because Spain-Gillon had never done this before and there were no securities courses in law school while we were there. The offering seemed to go off well, but later it was discovered by John McKleroy that something had been overlooked, I'm not now sure what it was but it was significant and a lot seemed at stake. John Gillon put it all face-up on the table with my father and said Spain-Gillon would take care of it on its dime. And it was taken care of. John McKleroy now represents all of my father's myriad legal interests, and the interests of some of my other relatives, while other members of Spain-Gillon represent even other relatives. And Spain & Gillon remains Golden Flake's (now Golden Enterprises') corporate counsel. But perhaps I get ahead of myself, so let me go back in time and tell you of yet another short but sweet sermon.

It was around 1982. I had almost given up on the general practice of law, which I had entered in 1973, after working four years for Golden Flake. I was in poor health and was stumbling around in general. Downtown around noon one day, I dropped into John's Restaurant on 21st Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues North. A popular New Orleans and Greek-style sea food cuisine, John's also served plate lunches, meat and two or three veggies, cornbread and rolls, tea or coffee, for about five bucks. There was a special table where only lawyers sat, just dropping in for lunch and chewing the fat. John Gillon and some men I did not recognize were sitting at their own table, which suggested they probably were not just chewing the fat.

When I went over to say hi to John, he said he wanted to see me about something, could I come by his office? Sure, I said, I'd come by. Wow, what could that be? I let my imagination run pretty good with it. I should have known better. When I dropped in on John a few days later, he said, "You're never going to be happy until you find God. That's

all I wanted to say to you." We then talked about different things that were on my mind but probably didn't have anything to do with what John had just speared me with. Finally, John pulled out a Zondervern Bible, my first inkling that such a Bible was even in existence, and showed it to me. It seemed to interest him a great deal, making fine distinctions between English and Greek translations.

I believed in God, always had. But for me the Bible was an arcane law book, written for people in another time, even as it seemed to threaten to upend me and other people in this time. Church didn't appeal at all to me. I felt a lot closer to God in my vegetable garden, paddling white-water rivers with friends, writing, and stalking bonefish on the flats in the Florida Keys, alone, with my second wife, Jane, and with our fishing guide friend, Rick Ruoff. I felt a lot closer to God junking with Jane, helping her with her artwork, going with her to out of town art shows, hanging out and fishing at her family's lake property in Blount County, half-way to Oneonta from Birmingham, near the communities of Allgood, Remlap and Palmer. (Remlap is Palmer spelled backwards). I felt a lot closer to God when I was with my daughters. Sometimes I felt a lot closer to God when I was with other family members. I had never felt close to God practicing law. I knew in my bones John was correct, but didn't know what to do about it.

I don't remember having much dealing with John after that fated day. However, I do remember hearing his wife had died and he had eventually remarried at the ripe young age of about eighty-five. I also remember, after the young lawyers in his law firm decided they wanted to purchase and restore an old building on 2nd Avenue North, just east of 21st Street for their modern law office, John was said to have squawked a bit, but then went along. I also remember seeing his office in the new law firm; he wasn't there at that time. It looked just like his office at the old location: he still had his old wooden desk and wooden swivel chair, the same metal and wooden bookshelves, the same green visor, to keep the glare off the law books he read as voraciously as ever. It as if time had outwardly stood still for John Gillon, the lawyer, while inwardly he surely was still the one lawyer I would want representing me in just about anything I might need a lawyer for, even it was not an area in which he had practical expertise. He had native expertise, no matter what area of the law he was in, and I saw it proven time and time again.

Many times, things would happen to Golden Flake that would cause most people or businesses to file a lawsuit. However, nearly every time that happened, John told my father not to file a lawsuit, but to try to work it out, and if that didn't get it taken care of, then to let it go. This scenario came about most often when a shortage of potatoes developed and the price of spuds shot straight up through the roof. Some farmers would bolt their potato contracts entered into before the growing season had begun, and sell their potato crops to the highest bidder. Some of these farmers had been bailed out in other years, when there had been a surplus crop and spud prices had plunged, but Golden Flake had not gone shopping for the lowest offers and had honored the contracts. Mounted over doorways in Golden Flake's offices and lunch rooms are large golden rulers, on which are written, "Do unto others as you want done unto you."

There were only two times known to me, when John Gillon was prepared to litigate. The first time actually resulted in litigation, after another company came into Birmingham selling "Golden Flake" bread. The natural assumption in the average person's mind was this bread company was part of the Golden Flake "Potato Chip Company," which was a household name and product in Birmingham and Alabama. John invoked the federal trademark and unfair competition laws in the local United States District Court, and Golden Flake ended up collecting treble damages, as I recall the story.

The other time was after I had clerked for Judge Allgood in 1968-69, and now was working for Golden Flake. We had started making our own corn chips because potatoes were about ninety-percent water and it was very good to get fifteen pounds of potato chips out of a hundred pounds of whole potatoes, after all the water was boiled out of the sliced raw potatoes and a little oil was absorbed in the cooking process. Whereas, a hundred pounds of dry corn might produce about one hundred and fifteen pounds of corn chips after oil absorption. Hoping to cash in on Fritos' corn chip franchise with consumers, we had designed our corn chip packaging to sort of resemble Fritos corn chip packaging. By and by, Frito-Lay's lawyers wrote a low-key letter, saying Frito-Lay had done some market research in Montgomery, Alabama grocery stores, and the market research indicated Golden Flake Corn Chips packaging so resembled Fritos Corn Chips packaging that confusion was resulting in the market place. A meeting at Golden Flake's Birmingham offices was requested, to discuss resolving this confusion.

Frito-Lay had come about by virtue of Lay's Potato Chips jobbing Fritos Corn Chips for many years. Although Frito was larger than Lay's, Herman Lay owned all of his company and ended up with more stock in the merged company than anyone else, and thus became its chairman of the board. My father, perhaps the shrewdest investor on this planet, according to some people who perhaps ought to know, then purchased a large amount of Frito-Lay's common stock, hedging his bet on his own company. That hedge would prove very profitable some years later, when Pepsi-Cola and Frito-Lay merged, and Herman Lay ended up being Chairman of the Board of PepsiCo. No doubt, my father's position in Frito-Lay common stock was known to Frito-Lay's attorneys when we all sat down that day to discuss the corn chip package confusion we were said to be creating in the market place.

It all boiled down to the fact that Fritos Corn Chips had a familiar slanted red bar across the top of its packaging, in the middle of which slanted red bar was a red oval, over which was written "Fritos" in white letters. For all of its products — potato chips, cheese curls, pork skins, popcorn, peanuts, snack crackers and so forth — Golden Flake used a familiar red slanted bar across the top of its packaging, in the middle of which slanted red bar nestled a golden potato chip, over which was written Golden Flake in red letters. Frito-Lay's lawyers wanted Golden Flake to remove the slanted red bar from its corn chip packaging, and, of course, Golden Flake did not wish to do that.

Sometime before this meeting, John Gillon had asked us to round up all available photos of Golden Flake packaging and trucks that could be found. The photos showed this

very same slanted bar and logo had been featured on all Golden Flake packaging and route and transport trucks since the 1920s, which predated Fritos going into business. After showing the photo album to Frito-Lay's lawyers, John said, if there was any confusion in the market place, Fritos had caused it way back when, by choosing a logo similar to Golden Flake's. Therefore, Frito-Lay could stop the confusion by redesigning its corn chip packaging.

The matter was settled when Golden Flake agreed to slightly change the coloration of its corn chip packaging, and instead of using opaque packaging, it would use packaging with a clear window that allowed the corn chips to be seen. Golden Flake had always used windowed packaging, except it had not done so with corn chips because Fritos had set the national standard by using opaque packaging for corn chips. After going to the windowed packaging, Golden Flake's corn chip sales increased because some consumers liked to see what they were getting. It was that way also with John Gillon: what you saw was what you got.

So now comes, I sense, the moment of truth. I see John Gillon before me. He's puffing that same old pipe, sitting in that same old wooden swivel chair beside that same old wooden roll top desk. He's looking straight into me. He's wanting to know if I'm now ready to take an entry-level position in my Father's law firm. This time I'm saying yes, and here come the tears.

Postscript

A DEVOUT CHRISTIAN BIRMINGHAM FRIEND who read the last story asked me if I ever went to work for my father's law firm? I told him to note the spelling of Father in the last paragraph. For others, perhaps the "Shanghaied" poem, which set up this little book falling out of me, explains it better.

Part Two

Law & Spirit

By a Southern Lawyer Who Became A Mystic

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS THE SECOND in a trilogy that summarizes my agony and ecstasy progression from human law into spiritual law, and then flashes back to my sometimes amusing and not so amusing legal training at the University of Alabama School of Law, and related events.

OPENING STATEMENT

Star Date: September 11, 2019

YESTERDAY WAS THE ANNIVERSARY of my infant son's sudden death in September 1967, just before I entered my last semester at the University of Alabama School of Law, in Tuscaloosa. In August 1988, I returned to my son's unmarked grave for the first time, and fell to my knees and burst into heaving sobs for a good while. I came back a few days later, and it happened again. I kept coming back until it quit happening. I had a marker put on his grave, on which was engraved: "He opened our hearts and set us on our journey." I dedicated my first law& spirit book, *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD: A New Approach to Legal Problems*, "To my son, who died for me."

During the night of September 9, 2001, a familiar voice asked me in my sleep, "Will you make a prayer for a Divine Intervention for all of humanity?" I woke up and made the prayer. On September 11, 2001, my concern was America would retaliate with a war overseas, which would be a really bad idea. It didn't occur to me that America would start two wars, which were a really bad idea.

During the night of September 9, 2002, the same voice asked me in my sleep to make the *same* prayer, but that time I made the prayer in my sleep, and I added to it, "And let it begin in me!" That was *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* approach.

What follows suggests what might happen to someone who steps onto the spiritual path, as yet having no clue what might lie in store. I can imagine many church people I have known, I was raised Southern Baptist, then Episcopalian, might view some of what follows as heresy, or madness. Likewise, most people I have known.

THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD

WHAT FOLLOWS MOSTLY GERMINATED in my professional psychic friend Gloria Reiser's and my dreams.

Yesterday evening, Gloria reported a dream of the night before, in which she and I were baking bread together. My mysterious friend Young Prophet also was dreaming about me writing a book. Over a year ago, two other friends said they had dreamed I would write a new book. Yesterday afternoon, I started writing this whatever it is.

Let's begin.

In the fall of 1987, driving on US 285 from Boulder, Colorado to the Arkansas River Valley in the shadow of towering Mts Princeton, Harvard and Yale below Buena Vista, Colorado, I was seized with an emotional vision that I would write a book about practicing law in a new way. I was uplifted and excited. I hoped, finally, perhaps, I would do something that caused me to feel okay about myself.

I was in my 45th year. All my adult life I had been subsidized by inheritances. I had never made it in the world of business, law, writing, investing. I came from a rich, prominent, southern, white, Southern Baptist family, and had practiced law in Birmingham, Alabama from 1973 to 1985.

After writing three "Ralph Nader-ish" books during the early 1990s, about the residential real estate industry and the legal profession, I quit practicing law, because it was not working for me. In early 1986, I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, hoping to reboot my life by attending massage school and becoming immersed in alternative healing and the New Age.

By early 1987, I realized that did not reboot me. I felt I had failed in every way a man could fail. Living off inheritances, in poor physical health, headed toward my second divorce, I prayed one morning, "Dear God, I do not wish to die like this, failed. Please help me." I paused, added, "I offer my life to human service." I teared up. Felt something move in me. Went about my day.

About 10 days later, I woke up in the wee hours and saw two what I took to be angels hovering above me in the dark. No wings, White with tint of blue. Etheric form. I heard, as if spoken into my mind, not into my ears, "This will push you to your limits, but you asked for it and we are going to give I to you." I recalled the forlorn prayer I had made. There was a white flash and my body was jolted by something electrical. That rapidly happened two more times. The beings faded away.

I realized my new girlfriend was awake. This was her bedroom in her home, in Los Alamos, maybe 50 miles across the high desert from Santa Fe. She was an environmental biologist. The mission of the lab where she worked was to use vegetation to try to soak up and neutralize the awful toxins the other labs there were putting into the ground and the

water table. She was far more tuned into the threat human beings posed to the planet, than I was.

I asked her if she was awake?

"Yes," she said. "What's going on?"

"Did you see or hear anything?" I asked.

"Your body jumping," she said.

"Did you see or hear the angels?" I asked.

She was a closet mystic. "No," she said,

I told her what had happened, which was my first direct conscious experience with the supernatural.

She laughed, said, "Let's go back to sleep, you strange man."

This and that "coincidence" happened, and I moved to Boulder, Colorado later that year, to take a several-months training in Hakomi body psychotherapy. Our instructors told us Hakomi is an ancient Hopi word no longer in use, meaning, "How do I stand in relation to all these many realms?" The training was about bringing what is stored hidden inside of us into our conscious awareness. The process of doing that was seriously emotional, sometimes violently emotional. We learned by our instructors doing Hakomi on us, and by doing it on each other and on practice clients from the general public.

After the first break in the very intense and very interesting training, I drove down to Santa Fe, to see old friends there, and my closet mystic environmental scientist girlfriend. As I entered the Arkansas River valley on US 285, I had the vision of writing the book about practicing law in a new way.

I hoped the book would make me rich and famous, and prove my manhood. Not a good start, but I didn't know that yet.

I let some friends know about the vision, including my New York City book agent, who seemed excited about the new book. I wrote a draft and shared a it with two New Age friends, a man and woman. They said it was a good start and to throw it away and start over. I kept plugging away. Garbage and more garbage. I became discouraged.

Then, I took a trip with my new Boulder girlfriend to Zurich, Switzerland. She was a student of Dora Kalff, who had pioneered what she called "Sandplay Therapy." A former student of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, Dora told her students, I was present as a visitor, that her good friend the Dalai Lama had called Sandplay, "applied Buddhism". Dora said she wished she had named it, "A Way of Life." She said from time to time, that for any real change to happen on this world, the women would have to go first.

That was a very interesting trip for me. Some strange things happened. Perhaps to herald what lay ahead for me.

I had moved back to Birmingham before that trip, and was wondering if my Boulder girlfriend and I would stay together? I returned to Birmingham from Zurich.

Shortly afterward, I was called by a woman in Maine, who said she had found my book, *KILL* ALL *THE LAWYERS?: A Client's Guide to Hiring, Firing, Using and Suing Lawyers*, in her small town's library. I was the only lawyer who could help her, she said.

I asked her how in the world she had gotten my telephone number and found me in Birmingham? She said she had called the Alabama Bar Association. I said, okay, but I don't practice law anymore. She said, Oh, me, she didn't know what she would do! She had been thinking of going to a spiritual adviser about her legal trouble. I said I sometimes give people spiritual advice, did she want to try that with her legal trouble? Yes, she said. So, I asked her to tell me about her case.

It was a mess, involving an ex- or soon to be ex-husband. As if a light switch was thrown, I started asking her questions about what this and that aspect of the case reminded her of elsewhere in her life, then and in the past? As if she was seized by something, she named this or that person and/or drama. We together realized that her legal woe was a metaphor for her major relationships, which needed her attention. She was freaked out. I was elated. Finally, this surely was the vision coming into play. The new way of practicing law.

It was.

After that, I moved back to Boulder where people started showing up with legal issues. Some of them were willing to look at it as the woman from Maine had done. Others were not open to that approach. It was as if I was meeting two different species of human beings.

I wrote a fresh draft of the book and sent it to my New York book agent. She paid a book editor to read the book and give feedback. The feedback was crushing. My presentation style and tone sucked. I should start over. Or give it up.

I hired a Boulder friend to edit the next draft. He tore it up for the same reasons, and because my writing style sucked generally. I was crushed.

Something rallied me. I wrote another draft. New material came to me during daily walks, and in dreams. My local editor friend said it was hot! He liked it! He edited that draft, and then said he was worn-out editing.

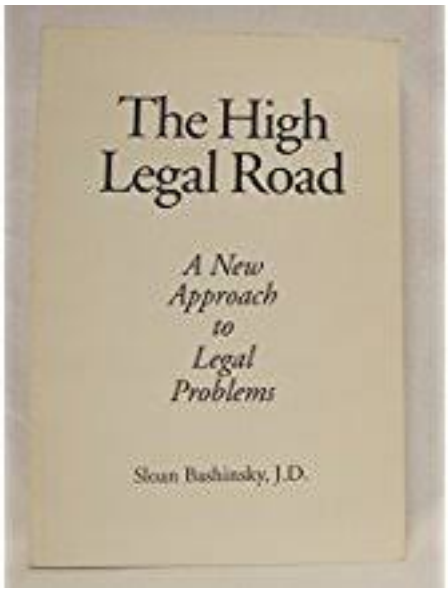
I sent that draft to my New York book agent. She said she liked it.

I sent a copy to a Birmingham publicist, who had represented my earlier three books and had gotten me on national television, including TODAY with Jane Pauley. I was interviewed maybe 300 times on radio and TV and by newspaper journalists. The reality of her representation was that very few books stocked by bookstores, and the sales of the three books were poor. Cart before the horse. Maybe it would have gone differently if I had not gone testosterone for publicity, to try to get the publishers excited about the books, which were getting great reviews and media attention.

The Birmingham publicist liked the draft of the new book, compared it to *ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE*. She urged me to hire a New York PR firm to work with me, get me ready for national TV interviews. I felt she had missed the point. I invited her to get out of her Mercedes and join me in my Chevrolet. I heard nothing further from her. She was deeply involved in the Gurdjieff spiritual movement. I had

learned of it from her in Birmingham. It didn't take. I moved to Santa Fe. Then, to Boulder.

I decided to self-publish the new book. I found a firm in Birmingham, which helped authors do that. Their CEO and a book editor helped me get the text more readable and less volatile, and ready for a publishing company in Birmingham to print and bind. It was summer, 1990.



My ego had been turned every-which-a-way-but-loose. I had spent nearly two years being stood in front of a mirror, looking at me. Some of that was shared in the new book. Much of it was not.

After the book was published in September 1990, I was contacted by a New Age publicist, whom I paid to get me on radio talk shows and find New Age publications that would review:

The publicist introduced me to Gloria Reiser, a professional psychic, who published a monthly newsletter called *Intuitive Explorations*. Gloria introduced *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* to her readers. I contributed articles to her newsletters. Some of her readers seemed to take a shine to me, others seemed to think I was nuts, or worse.

The publicist did a good job, the media interviews were lively, but there was no sales force, and the company I had found in Birmingham to fill orders called or mailed in, did not get many orders.

Perhaps 300 copies of the 5,000-print run were sold. In the end, I gave away a lot of copies, the principal recipient was the Prison Library Project in Clermont, California, which Ram Das had started with help from Bo Lozoff, who told me he really did not like the book. Bo had written several books about his and his wife's experiences going into prisons and counseling inmates.

The Episcopalian chaplain of the state prison in Buena Vista, Colorado somehow got a copy of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD,* read it and contacted me. He said he was coming to Boulder on personal business and he wanted to meet me. We met for lunch. He said I should read *THE MAGUS OF STROVOLOS*, about a Cypress mystic. He thought I was headed in that direction.

He later shared his copy of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* with the Episcopalian chaplain at the old maximum-security prison in Cañon City, Colorado, who invited me to do a weekend workshop in the prison chapel.

The first morning, there were about twenty inmates. Most of them looked like they worked out a lot. I was rail-thin back then. Most of them could easily break me in half. By the end of the Saturday morning session, they had pushed their chairs back as far from me as they could get. About half of them returned for the afternoon session.

There were three inmates at the Sunday morning session. One of them did not show up for the afternoon session. Another inmate made it three again. Afterward, he told me he was so disturbed by what he'd seen and heard the day before, that he needed to be by himself. He asked if we could correspond? I said, Yes.

It would turn out that he was the only of all the inmates I would meet, mostly as pen pals, who was innocent.

He told me that he was into trying to stop drug trafficking. He went out with a woman, who snitched for a state anti-drug trafficking agency. She slipped something into his drink, and he passed out. She sliced him up with a knife and claimed he had tried to rape her. He had no recollection, so he could not, in good faith, mount a defense. Against his public defender's advice, he took a plea to aggravated sexual assault.

I came into a brief correspondence with the famous Wyoming trial lawyer Gerry Spence. I invited him to look at my prison pen pal's case. Spence declined.

Some years later, my friend's mother died, and he was not allowed to go to her funeral. He was really upset. I reminded him that he had told me that she had molested him in his youth, and that had really messed him up. He got mad at me.

At that time, I was in conversation with his public defender, who said it was the only case he had handled, which still bothered him. He was interested in trying to reopen the case. I told my friend that. He resisted. I told him that made no sense if he was innocent. He got madder at me.

That's when it dawned on me why he had not fought his conviction. As he had been overpowered by his mother, he was overpowered by the female snitch. I told him that, hoping he would then contact his public defender. He got madder at me.

My friend served 26 years. After getting out, he started trying to help inmates get new trials, whom he believed were framed or did not have competent legal counsel. He's still doing that.

From time to time I received letters from prison inmates, who had read *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* and wanted to correspond with me. Some of them were interesting. Deep. Some of them were still going about it the old way. Fighting their convictions. Pursuing

their appeals. Those who did not admit they were guilty made no progress, it seemed to me.

From time to time, I wondered if I might write a later version of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD*. I figured it would be very different from the original, which was anguished and written as my angel-directed daily spiritual training was just beginning. When I learned that being stood in front of a mirror is crucial to spiritual development. When I learned the New Age publicist did not care for the mirror.

After she did such a good job, I thanked her and said it was time to stop paying her a monthly fee. She said she could get me more interviews and reviews. I said I thought it was time to stop. She insisted. I agreed to pay her another month's fee and sent her a check. She didn't make any effort that month. I told her she owed me a refund. She said she didn't. I said she did, but I wasn't going to press it. That would not be the high legal road approach.

Later, I learned that Gloria Reiser didn't care much for the mirror. Nor did the New Age. Nor the Old Age.

I got involved for a while with the Christian Legal Society, headquartered in Billings, Montana. Their members in Birmingham were cordial but were not able to translate turning the other cheek into not suing people.

Today, I tell people who talk about killing the lawyers, if they really want to do it, then stop using lawyers.

Early this year, 2019, Gloria Reiser told me that the New Age publicist came to her in a dream and said we (Gloria and I) had not yet realized, or achieved, what all she had brought us together to do.

Not long ago, Gloria reported the publicist popping in during a dream, just to say, "Hi!". That was when Gloria and I both were having dreams, which caused me to start writing whatever this is.

My dream maker started editing this whatever it is, right after it started coming out of me. Much the same happened during the writing of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD*.

Just last night, July 22, 2019, my dream maker pointed out that there were two times since *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* was published, when I did not turn the other cheek and grueling litigation ensured. Perhaps the Jury in God's Court is still out on those two cases.

Meanwhile, *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* sometimes is available at used online bookstores, such as Abe Books, and I have seen it at Amazon.

As for a review, how about what my editor at the Prentice-Hall division of Simon & Shuster told me, after he read the manuscript.

He said the manuscript had really moved him. He agreed with some parts, wanted to argue with other parts. The problem was, the book was too spiritual to be a legal book, and too legal to be a spiritual book. His company did not know how to market it and had to decline.

I thought that was exactly what the book was supposed to be, and why didn't he and his company see that?

PRISONS & FREEDOM

I INTRODUCED BO LOZOFF briefly in the first chapter.

I learned of Bo in1991, via his book, *WE'RE ALL DOING TIME*, which I found in the Boulder Bookstore on Pearl Street Mall. Mostly, the book recounted Bo and his wife Sita's experiences inside of prisons with inmates and correspondence with inmates. I was impressed and read a few more of his books.

In part, Bo's books inspired me to write about the workshop the Episcopal chaplain asked me to do in the prison in Cañon City, Colorado. I then added personal stories about my and other peoples' own personal courses in mirrors, and how we fared (writhed) dealing with our reflections. Then, I added a third part of the book, which was a bit more "woo woo" – metaphysical.

I gave the new manuscript to a Boulder desktop publisher, whom I had met through a mutual acquaintance. The publisher called her company Apple Pie Communications. She downloaded the manuscript from a floppy disk into her computer, and read it and made some editorial suggestions, and argued with some of it, and liked some of it. We became friends. She liked it that I paid her on time, she was living month to month. She found someone to proof-read the manuscript, and then she laid it out and sent it to a printer, who ran off 1,000 copies of *PRISONS & FREEDOM,* the first book I would not copyright.

Gloria Reiser and I introduced *PRISONS & FREEDOM* to readers of her monthly newsletter, *Intuitive Explorations*. She agreed to take payments and fill orders. I shipped most of the copies to her, along with a lot more copies of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD*.

I sent a copy of *PRISONS & FREEDOM* to Bo Lozoff, because I had mentioned his and Sita's work in the Preface. I gave them credit for their work with inmates and for inspiring me, and I reported that, in something they had published, they had abandoned their long policy of not asking prison inmates for donations. I got a letter back from Bo, tearing up *PRISONS & FREEDOM* and *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD*. Pop psychology. Psychobabble. I had cut him and Sita to the quick.

That led to further correspondence, which did not get happier. Finally, I ripped up a letter from Bo, unopened, and told him that in a letter and did not hear back. Yet, I kept receiving his and Sita's newsletter from time to time. I kept up with them in that way.

After it became clear that I'd had printed way too many copies of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* and *PRISONS & FREEDOM*, I sent some of them to a local bookstore in Birmingham, to be given away to the store's customers. I knew the owner. We had a good relationship. The rest of the books were sent to the Prison Library Project in Clermont, California, which had been started by Ram Das with Bo Lozoff's help.

Some time passed. I called the Prison Library Project about something, perhaps to get a receipt for the books, so I could take a tax deduction. The fellow I spoke with thanked

me for all the books, said they were going out to inmates. He paused, said, there was something he felt he needed to tell me. At Bo Lozoff's insistence, they were removing the Preface from *PRISONS & FREEDOM*, before sending it to inmates. Really? Yes, really, the man said, and he didn't feel right about it. I thanked him for telling me. He said they would stop doing it, if I wished. I said I wanted to think about it. He said, Ok. I called him back the next day, I think, and said to just keep doing it, if they wished. That was Bo's karma.

I wrote to Bo and told him all of that. I did not hear back.

I kept getting Bo and Sita's newsletter.

In a newsletter, Bo announced he was going into a period of public silence. A spiritual retreat, of sorts. Next thing I recall was a newsletter after Bo came out of several, or more, months of public silence. He reported someone had given his foundation a large track of land and he needed money to develop it as a place for prisoners to live after they were released. Bo said this was "money yoga".

Back some years, Bo had hung out in an ashram in India, studying under a yogi. He was one of many people with whom I'd had dealings in Santa Fe, and later in Boulder, who had hung out in ashrams in India. They seemed to me to have gotten twisted up inside. And, it seemed, possessed by the yogi.

I wrote to Bo, said he had gone into public silence to help his internal feminine develop. As a reward, when he came out of the silence, he was given the land. Then, instead of waiting on God to take it to the next level, his testosterone invented money yoga and laid that trip on his readers. I heard nothing back.

Bo and Sita's newsletter kept coming. The newsletters contained a photo of them.

One evening in Boulder, my wife read a newsletter that had just arrived. She told me to cover the right side of Sita's face with a piece of paper. I did that. The left side of Sita's face looked tortured. The female side. The right side looked very nice. I reported that to Bo in a letter. The next newsletter did not have a photo of Sita. Nor did any subsequent newsletters.

My wife sometimes told people, who asked her what I did (for a living), "Sloan's the mail man." If they didn't get it, she said, "He delivers the messages." If they still didn't get it, she said, "He can see around corners and through buildings." She sometimes was the mail woman.

In one of his books, Bo had written to an inmate, who was struggling with sexual urges, that he hoped the inmate would practice celibacy. Bo said he and Sita struggled with their own sexual urges. I felt sorry for Sita. My wife felt sorry for Sita. Maybe I reminded Bo of that in the letter about the left side of Sita's face.

I wondered if Bo shared any of my letters with Sita?

Flash forward to 2001, when I was at Gloria Riser's home. She had been contacted by a prison inmate who was soon to be released. He was thinking about going to Bo Lozoff's place. I told the inmate of some of my experiences with Bo, and suggested he give it more

thought. I think I recall he decided to do something else. Maybe I wrote to Bo about that. Not sure.

Flash forward to 2012, when I learned online of Bo Lozoff's death. I read articles reporting Bo had been called out by a number of his followers for being brutal and dictatorial with released inmates at his place. And, he was having sex with women there. I read of Bo not denying any of it, and of saying he was a horrible choice for God to use in that way.

I wondered about Bo's time in the ashram in India. When I lived on Boulder, I met a people who had been involved with yogis in India, who had sex with their female followers.

I was reminded of that just yesterday, when I received from a friend an old article about Bo, to that same effect, except the article was more balanced, provided kudos for Bo from people who had known him, as well as whines.

The article also reported some of the sex allegations, including Bo saying he healed a woman by putting his finger in her vagina. Afterward, she would be doing something and have a spontaneous organism.

Perhaps what prompted my friend to send me the Bo Lozoff article was my having sent him a draft copy of the first chapter to whatever this is. Perhaps just another worthless spiritual book, to borrow from Bo Lozoff's *JUST ANOTHER SPIRITUAL BOOK*, which I read after reading *WE'RE ALL DOING TIME*, which we all are. Bo sure got that right.

After *PRISONS & FREEDOM* was published in 1991, my wife and I met a lovely woman from Ireland, who came to Boulder occasionally because of a man she had met there. She stayed in our home, however.

At her request, I mailed copies of *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* and *PRISONS & FREEDOM* and some of my later writings to her home in Dublin. She shared those writings with some of her friends, who were starving for something different, based on what she reported back to me.

She told me they wanted to know what I thought of *THE CELESTINE PROPHECY*. I replied that the author was from my hometown, Birmingham, Alabama. There are twelve insights in the book. After you achieve the twelfth, you become invisible to anyone around you, who has not reached the twelfth. The author got on the front of *Time Magazine*, as the "Celestine Prophet". He did not become invisible.

In 1995, I met a woman in Birmingham, who said she and the author of *THE CELESTINE PROPHECY* had been friends. They attended the Unity Church in Birmingham, on Highland Avenue. They used to sit around at the church, sharing ideas. A lot of *THE CELESTINE PROPHECY* was her ideas, for which the author took full credit. She felt he owed her half the million$$$ he was making off the book. Alabama had a 5 percent income tax. He moved to Florida, where there is no state income tax.

A later novel by the Celestine Prophet was about a man wandering around lost in space and time in the Appalachian Mountains. I thought perhaps the Celestine Prophet wrote about himself.

As time passed, more inmates wrote to me about *PRISONS & FREEDOM*, than about *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD*. I thought *PRISONS & FREEDOM* the better book. However, my inmate friend, who did twenty-six years, said he liked *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* best.

Shortly after *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* was published, I received in the mail from my father's attorney a check for $26,000 and some change. What I had spent on the book. My father had done something in a trust without consulting his lawyer, to get money for himself. It was illegal under the Internal Revenue Code. To cure it, the money was sent to his children.

26 is the sacred number for God.

Early in writing *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD*, I had approached my father about being my business partner in the book. He asked if I was sure? I said I would think more on it. I dreamed that night of strangling an ugly, overweight woman, who turned into an enraged, terrifying, huge viper, who said, "You did it to me before, are you going to do it to me again?!" I woke up, terrified.

It didn't take long to connect the dream with my going to work for my father's company, instead of into the practice of law, was the worst decision of my life. The dream woman and snake were what going to work for my father had done to my inner feminine, and to my still ailing G.I. tract. I called my father and told him, thanks, but I would not need his financial assistance with the new book.

PRISONS & FREEDOM was published over the strong advice of a Birmingham fundamental Christian lawyer friend, who was an alcoholic. I mailed a copy to my father, with a note that sometimes I write about personal stuff in my books, because it makes the writing more alive.

A few days later, my father called, said he wanted to talk with me about something. I asked if he'd gotten my note and the book? No. He said he wanted to buy my mother's home, which he had given her years before. She had left it in her last will and testament to her children, but he had the right to live in it. I said it was just a lawyer's trick to save taxes, I was happy to give him my interest in her home. He said, No, he wanted to push some money to his children. He would get the home evaluated by two appraisers, average the appraisals, and send me a check for my portion. I said, Okay.

The check was for around $356,000. I had been worrying about my diminishing capital, on which I was living and supporting my Boulder wife and her son, because my writing was not producing revenue. 3 is the number for The Holy Spirit, 5 is the number for the feminine, 6 is the number for Melchizedek.

After reading *PRISONS & FREEDOM*, the Director of the New Age massage school I attended in Santa Fe, New Mexico, wrote to me that the book was way too rough on people, but in my defense, I was as rough on myself as I was on everyone else in the book.

Today, I saw a few copies of *PRISONS & FREEDOM* online at Abe Books and Amazon.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

OKAY, I AGREE. That was a torrid first two chapters, which just plopped, when they were ready, onto my laptop monitor screen. There was plenty of preliminary plodding in my dreams and the dreams of my professional psychic friend, Gloria Reiser, my mysterious friend, Young Prophet, and my homeless girlfriend. Alas, the Muse has her own timetable and ways. She's the boss. Right?

I dreamed last night of making love to my second wife, who was with me during most of the time I practiced law in Birmingham, Alabama, and who, I suppose, was the muse for my first three books: *HOME BUYERS: Lambs to the Slaughter?*, *SELLING YOUR HOME $WEET HOME*, and *KILL* ALL *THE LAWYERS? – A Client's Guide to Hiring, Firing, Using and Suing Lawyers*, which were my farewell to the traditional practice of law.

Those three books were objective proof that I was not a member in good standing of THE STATUS QUO. Those books lay the foundation of a full-bore "career" in rocking lots of boats, which did not particularly seem to like being rocked. My second wife was my champion during that time. She had my back. I was less noble.

In my defense, I was in constant pain from the bowel disorder. I lost two heart-breaking plaintiff lawsuits, into which I had put my entire soul and being, which in a different dimension would have been decided hands down in my clients' favor.

My law practice did not blossom into a money maker. My relations with my law partners slowly deteriorated. We finally parted ways. I tried practicing law alone. That went nowhere. I closed my law office and took a fiction writer's course in an adult education class. I wrote a few short stories. The teacher really liked one of them.

I went to a health clinic in Switzerland. Came back about the same.

We traveled some.

Then, I felt like writing a book about buying homes. I had closed a lot of residential real estate transactions. I had seen things. I knew that terrain. I dedicated *HOME BUYERS: Lambs to the Slaughter* to my fiction writing teacher. Cosmic poetry, the book was accused of being fiction by the residential real estate industry. It was not fiction. SELLING YOUR HOME $WEET HOME, also not fiction, got about the same reception.

Both books got me on national TV and scads of radio talk shows around America. I talked with a whole lot of call-in listeners on the air. They seemed glad I was around, the talk show hosts seemed glad to have me on their shows. Realtors who called in did not seem glad. However, a few Realtors elsewhere in America welcomed me with open arms, for supporting their efforts to have real estate agents represent either the seller or the buyer, but not both.

I heard some Birmingham lawyers really did not like *KILL ALL THE LAWYERS?*, but it got a nice review from a local trial judge, and a rave review in the *Birmingham News*. And, it got me on national TV and scads of radio talk shows around America. About the same talk show host and audience reception as the two real estate books.

I was somewhat famous in the residential real estate and legal circles in America. Briefly. But the book publishers did not have books in the stores. There was no internet or Amazon kindle. It was not easy for me to admit I had spent a lot of money promoting those books, getting that publicity, before the publishers were ready for the publicity to happen.

Well, I was kinda desperate to have success. Too desperate.

The desperation was rooted in my own personal defeats, as I perceived them back then, and in my having failed to measure up to the enviable business and financial success of my father and his father. My shame was deep and I suppose some of it still is with me today, despite all the changes I went through, which left me on this world, but not really of it.

That raises another thought in my head. My infant son died suddenly, it was ruled "crib death," today known as sudden infant death syndrome, just before my last semester at the University of Alabama School of Law, in Tuscaloosa. A small prestigious Birmingham corporate and trial law firm already had offered me a job. I was so upended that I did not follow through.

By then, married men and students were being drafted to fight in Vietnam. A lottery was being used. I had lost my father deferment. I drove to the Draft Board in Birmingham and applied for a student deferment, which would allow me to complete my last semester, and then I would be inducted. I hoped I would be used as a military lawyer, instead of being sent to Vietnam. Yet, I thought maybe I should join the Marine Corps, and go to Vietnam. I already was mostly dead inside.

My wife got pregnant. I drove back to the Draft Board, hoping to undo what I had recently done there.

The same older lady clerk waited on me. I told her my story. She said she was really sorry, but the student deferment was irrevocable. She pulled my file out of a green filing cabinet, to show me what I had signed. She looked in the file, said there had been some mistake. What mistake?, I asked. You signed the wrong form, she said, you will have to fill out the correct form. No thanks, I said. I will keep my father deferment. I knew God had made that miracle.

Many years later, I would meet a woman whose husband was that Draft Board lady's son. He had become a very good trial lawyer in Birmingham. I had gotten to know him somewhat when I practiced law. I tried one case against him and won, because the facts and sentiments were on my client's side.

Well, his wife told me decades later, that she had heard a lot of Draft Board stories like mine. Apparently, his mother had seen to it that a number of young Birmingham men did not get sent to Vietnam.

Freed from that terror, I was persuaded by a good law school buddy, who had graduated the year before me, and by his lawyer father and his law partner, country lawyers in south Alabama, that I should be a country lawyer myself. I would like it a lot more than being a city lawyer. And, it would be a lot easier to dove, quail and duck hunt in the country. And, to fish. And, it was a lot closer to the Gulf Coast, where I liked to fish.

They sent me to see a very respected defense trial lawyer in the south Alabama town where my father and his father were born. My father and this trial lawyer had played together when they were young, before my father's father moved his family to Birmingham. This trial lawyer had had a son die.

I was not bright enough then to suspect my law school buddy and his father and his father's law partner had greased the way.

The trial lawyer in my father's home town welcomed me with open arms. Said he was referring a lot of business to other lawyers in town. Would refer that business to me. Had an extra office I could use. His legal secretary only worked about half-time, she would do my legal secretary work.

He took me to the drugstore on the town square and introduced me to a couple of local lawyers having coffee there. They welcomed me with opened arms. I drove back to my friend's town and told what had happened. Dang, I was gonna be a country lawyer!

I made on being a country lawyer my essay in a legal ethics course in law school. A college fraternity brother wrote to me, praising my decision and courage.

When I told my father what I had decided, he asked, Why would I want to do that?! I said, It's a lock and key offer. The country club there already offered me a membership. My pregnant wife and I already got approved for an apartment in a new apartment building under construction. I can fish and hunt a lot, which I love. I would be happy. That's no reason, my father said.

A Rubicon moment, I put it off.

My father's father said I had really disappointed him. He was so counting on me causing his family to be closer than it had been.

A Rubicon moment. I put it off.

My father's grandmother died. My wife and I drove from Tuscaloosa to the funeral in my Bashinsky family's south Alabama home town.

Leaving our car, I saw the trial lawyer, my future law partner, standing alone in the cemetery. We walked to him and greeted him. I saw my father and his father over the way. I walked with my future law partner to say, Hello. I introduced my future law partner. He stuck out his hand. They turned their back on him. My future law partner gave me a look.

A Rubicon moment. I put if off.

My wife and I drove back to Tuscaloosa. I was in shambles.

My father called to say the senior partner of his and his father's law firm was from a small town and he wanted to talk with me about being a country lawyer. I drove to Birmingham to see him. He said let's go to the law library, where the other members of

the firm are waiting. I knew some of them. My father and his father had paid them a whole lot of money in legal fees.

The senior partner asked me what I knew about being living in a small town? I said, Not much. The senior partner, a devout Christian and Bible scholar, said, Well, it's like this. All you have to do is drive out to the golf course on Saturday night to see who is fucking whose wife. He looked me dead in the eye. The other lawyers burst out laughing. I did not think it was funny, because I was having such thoughts.

Much later, I would write more about that senior partner in *A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN*, as part of my recovery from a latter-day Rubicon meltdown having nothing to do with Alabama. Self-published, several reprints, perhaps 2,000 copies given away.

Back to the fall of 1967 in Tuscaloosa.

A law professor approached me before class and said word was a federal judge in Birmingham has lost his law clerk, who resigned to practice law with his father. Perhaps I should check that out? I wrote to the judge, reported what I had been told by a law professor. The judge wrote back, inviting me to come see him.

I drove to Birmingham and met the judge in his chambers. Mostly, we talked about hunting and fishing. He said I had the job if I wanted it. I said I wanted it. Whew! The Rubicon was dodged.

Not hardly. My wife was really upset that I abandoned being a country lawyer. I drove back to south Alabama to tell my country lawyer friends. I drove over to my family's home town to tell my future law partner. He said he was not surprised after what had happened at the cemetery, but clerking for a federal judge was a golden opportunity for any law graduate. I should not feel bad.

The Rubicon did not die. It was chewing me up, actually.

I went to work for the federal judge. A giant among men, whose story I would tell in *A FEW REMARKABLE ALABAMA PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN*.

It went well with the federal judge for about a year. I was still undecided about being a country lawyer, or even being a lawyer. I woke up one morning, constipated. The beginning of the bowel disorder. My internist doctor was not able to fix it. Laxatives did not fix it. I was fucking terrified, because I knew it was from not of this world.

I lost my confidence. I interviewed with the U.S. Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission, which offered me an attorney job. I waffled.

I talked with Birmingham law firms. Got a job offer. I waffled.

Finally, I told my father I wanted to work for his company. Really?, he asked. Yes, I said.

My judge tried to talk me out of it. Said I could clerk another term for him. I said I had to move on.

Bataan Death march, it kinda became.

Worst decision of my life. Worst decision for my father, too.

Four years later, nearly dead, marriage in shambles, I told my father I had to move on.

Out of nowhere, I learned of a small, not prestigious law firm, looking for a new law associate. I interviewed them. They offered me a job. I accepted.

I told my father. He said that's the law firm in which one of the partners' father is that guy at the University of Alabama School of Medicine with the weird ideas. I said, Yes, so weird that the medical school and the surrounding University of Alabama in Birmingham grew so big that it's your company's biggest customer in Birmingham.

By then, my wife and I had two daughters. The older, whose birth had saved me from Vietnam, got run over on her bicycle by a Volkswagen driven by a nearly 90-year-old woman, who was not at fault. That did me in.

My senior law partner filed a lawsuit, which settled cheaply later on. A really bad idea, that lawsuit.

I figured I was the cause of what happened to my daughter. I was spending my spare time in the YMCA playing 4-wall handball. My daughter had told neighbor friends that her daddy's name was, "Handball".

I flagged down a passing car, which took us to the hospital where my daughter and her younger sister were born.

The hospital where I once ended up after contracting dysentery running a country route for my father's company the summer of 1964. The regular salesman was on vacation that week. My father was out of town on business. He called me in my hospital room and said, That's a really interesting way to get out of work. I was fighting for my life. My mother was really upset.

There is no cure for stupidity.

When *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* was ready to go to press in 1990, I added the dedication: "To my son, who died for me." I meant it. For his death had so unhinged me, that I never again was able to fit myself into THE STATUS QUO. Oh, I certainly tried. But that Rubicon had been crossed and all that remained was for me to figure that out and accept it. That would take a while.

Now let me say my father had many good qualities. His company employees loved him and kept voting against labor unions trying to get into the company. His business customers really liked him. He gave away a lot of money to good causes. A boys and girls ranch still operates today, because of his generosity.

But it was not meant to be for me to work for his company, and he seemed to be proud of me as a practicing attorney. He seemed concerned for me over my health issues. He told me that people had told him that my books were causing trouble. I asked him how he responded to that? He said he told them that it looked to him that I had told the truth.

We fell out many years later, after my alternative reality Boulder life melted down and I returned to Birmingham in shambles. He said I should get a job digging ditches. I said I was not physically able to do that, but I had applied for a job with the Birmingham Parks

Service. That seemed to jolt him. He said I should get an entry level position in a Birmingham law firm and start all over. I said my heart would not be in it.

His countenance turned mean. He said he could not believe a fifty-three-year-old man had never gotten over the death of his son. Something came over me. I said he would never criticize me again. We would see each other in the afterlife, where it would be better between us. I looked him in the eye, shook his hand, and left. He started coming to me in my dreams, and was the father that any son would want. He still sometimes comes to me in dreams, to help me.

Likewise, the federal judge started coming to me in dreams after I returned to Birmingham from Boulder. He never told me to go back into the practice of law. Perhaps because I had never left it, but was doing it in a different way.

I can imagine today that maybe the federal judge somehow had something to do with my finding that small across-the-tracks law firm in Birmingham, and later my writing those three boat-rocking legal consumer books, and my later writing *THE HIGH LEGAL ROAD* and *PRISONS & FREEDOM*, and my later writing four novels about lawyers, although the first was about a young man who, despite tremendous pressure from his deceased multi-dimensional Pleiadean father, declined to be a lawyer.

I know for a fact that the federal judge predicted in late 2000 that I would get into politics in the Florida Keys. When I was on a Greyhound bus, passing through Tallahassee, the Florida state capitol, en route to Key West, the judge came to me in a dream and said he was thinking about getting into politics. I said I didn't think that was a good idea, but knowing him, I figured he was going to do it. Back when he was a federal judge, behind the scenes, he ran the Democratic Party in Alabama.

It was during my political endeavors in Key West and the rest of the Florida Keys, that I came to view my efforts to help Mother Nature and little and poor people there, as trials in God's court, where I not only put on God's case, but, like everyone else in the Courtroom, was on trial myself.

I feel I have left out something important.

When I lived in Boulder, sometimes I came to Alabama. During one trip, I felt moved to visit my Bashinsky family's home town. I went to the cemetery and found the family plot. On the grave monument of my father's grandfather was engraved, "God's noblest creation is an honest man." His widow had that done. I also wrote about my Polish Jew great grandfather in *A FEW REMARKABLE PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN*.

THE LAW IS A JEALOUS MISTRESS

A FEW NIGHTS AGO, I was told in a dream. “Life began on Hackberry Lane.” The University of Alabama School of Law was on Hackberry Lane in Tuscaloosa, when I attended that law school.

I well recall my first day in class. The professor told us to look to our left, then to our right. Two of us would not be around by graduation time. That would prove out. My recollection is that professor was Clinton McGee.

Professor McGee taught criminal law. It was said, after graduating from the University of Alabama School of Law, Professor McGee had entered the U.S. Military and was sent overseas to defend accused Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. It was said he was getting them off, so he was made a prosecutor, and the ones he prosecuted did not get off. Professor McGhee didn’t deal out a lot of As and Bs either. He gave me a C. I deserved it.

Some years later, a law student name Roy Moore got nicknamed “Fruit Cake” by Professor McGee. Many years later, Moore got elected to the Alabama Supreme Court and then got removed because he put the Ten Commandments in the Supreme Court building and would not take them down. Moore got elected again to the Supreme Court and got removed again because of his religious fervor.

We had a law professor affectionately called “Hatchet Harry Cohen”, because he gave lots of low grades on final exams. He taught a real property course, based on a textbook he had written. I was assigned to a different section under a different law professor. I thought I was not learning anything, so I sat in on Professor Cohen’s classes in the other section. I memorized his textbook and made an A on the final exam. I had Professor Cohen for negligence torts the next semester. I fed back on the final exam, what he had said in class. I made an A. Professor Cohen often talked in class of the difference between being a “legal monk” (law professor), and being a real lawyer.

We had a law professor affectionately called “Black Jack Payne”, because he was a legal scholar and wore a green visor when he researched ancient legal history in the law library, and he dealt out final exam scores of 21 to graduating seniors. He taught negligence torts, and arcane real estate law, and I was darn glad I didn’t get assigned to his negligence torts section, but was assigned to Professor Cohen’s section. (Many years later, my oldest daughter married Professor Cohen’s son. I told my son-in-law a few law school stories about his father.)

We had a law professor named “Bad Sam Beatty,” who had a PhD in law, and would drill into us that the Law is a Jealous Mistress. The first day of class, Doctor Beatty looked down at his roll sheet and said, “Bashinnnsky! I like that name, Bashinnnsky. Is Mr. Bashinsky here today?” I stood up, as required when a law professor called on us.

Doctor Beatty said, “Mr. Bashinsky, what’s the first thing you do when a client comes into your office?” There was nothing about that in the reading assignment for the first class. I said, “I suppose you ask him why he came to see you.” Doctor Beatty said, “Sit down, Mr. Bashinsky, you will never make it as a lawyer?”

Doctor Beatty asked if anyone knew what is the first thing you do when a client comes into your office? A fellow somewhat older than the rest of us, Billy Church, who had been a Baptist preacher, raised his hand and rubbed his first two fingers against his thumb. “Correct, Mr. Church”, Doctor Beatty said. “You get paid.”

Up the road in Birmingham, was Samford University, a private Baptist school, to which my Baptist Grandfather Bashinsky had given a great deal of money. Attached to Samford was Cumberland School of Law. The tuition there was much higher than at my law school. Most of the students there graduated. 50-percent of them flunked the state bar exam. 95-percent of my graduating class passed it. Before the bar exam, I spent several months studying my law school class notes. I think that’s why I passed.

But I skipped over a few other interesting things about Doctor Beatty.

It was said that when he was a new lawyer, Sam Beatty had represented a black man accused of a crime against a white person. Beatty was convinced his client was framed. The white jury decided otherwise. The white Alabama appellate courts agreed with the white jury. Beatty told the appellate justices that he would never practice law before them again. He quit. He got his advanced law degrees and became a law professor.

Doctor Beatty had a good friend named Ryan deGraffenried, who was a rising political star in Alabama, a good and decent man, who could have changed the course of history in Alabama, if he had been elected governor. If, the small airplane in which he was traveling had not crashed and killed him. Doctor Beatty told us a little about his departed friend, what a great loss for the State of Alabama! Doctor Beatty said he was too upset to continue. Class dismissed.

The current law school dean, also a law professor, resigned being dean, he just wanted to teach. Doctor Beatty wanted to be dean. He was not selected. A law professor from up north was brought in to be dean. He instituted mandatory class attendance, which was really dumb, I thought. Alabama did not want lawyers, who had to be made to attend class. It wanted lawyers who were dedicated to the law. I said as much during a feedback meeting the new dean held.

Doctor Beatty announced he had taken a job teaching at the Cincinnati School of Law. He his lass class would be Uniform Commercial Code that summer. He was teaching Judicial Remedies. About ancient legal remedies, still part of Alabama law. Instead of his usual mostly low grades, he gave out only As, Bs and Cs. I got a C, and was grateful.

Thinking Doctor Beatty was making a statement to the law school bosses, and he would do it again in his summer Uniform Commercial Code class, a lot of graduating seniors signed up for that class. I signed up for the class. I studied my ass off. The final grade sheet had 3 As, 5Bs, perhaps 10 Cs, and about as many Ds and Fs. I got one of the Bs. By then, Doctor Beatty had moved to Cincinnati.

We started hearing rumors of how it was going in Cincinnati. Doctor Beatty was making his students stand up when he called on them. They were not used to that. He was disturbing their comfort zones in other ways. He was teaching Uniform Commercial Code. We liked hearing that.

A letter came from Doctor Beatty's students, asking for a copy of his final exam in Uniform Commercial Code. A genius among us, not I, sent them a copy of this UCC final exam grade sheet, on which was scrawled, "Suck wind, Yankee Bastards!" We heard Bad Sam really liked that letter.

Later, I heard Doctor Beatty left Cincinnati to teach at Mercer Law School in Macon Georgia. Then, I heard he was working in a Macon bank's trust department. I worried he was in a soul crisis.

Then, I heard Doctor Beatty was back in Tuscaloosa, practicing law.

Then, he ran for the Alabama Supreme Court, and got elected. I went before him on an appeal from a case I had lost on the pleadings in the Birmingham courts. He and the other justices ruled against me.

I dedicated *KILL* ALL *THE LAWYERS?*: "To my Law Professor Sam Beatty, who taught me how to think."

Many years later, as I was emerging from the black night, Doctor Beatty called me from Tuscaloosa, said he was coming to Birmingham to have lunch with a friend at The Club, he'd like for me to join them. I was, well, flabbergasted, but there was no way I would not be there.

It was a fairly low-key lunch and discussion, but some deep currents were touched. Three men, who had seen plenty, who recognized we were a bit different.

I told Doctor Beatty that I had long wondered something. He asked me what it was? "You sometimes gave me a really hard time in law school." He smiled, said, "Because I really liked you, Sloan!"

I don't know if Doctor Beatty read any of my books. I don't know why he called invited me to join him and his friend that day. I had no further contact with him in this life. But then, maybe it was he who told me in my sleep recently, "Life began on Hackberry Lane"?

There was yet another The Club event when I was coming out of the black night. A law school reunion, during which I learned a classmate named Billy Scruggs had become the president of the Alabama Bar Association.

In law school, Billy had teamed up with Billy Church during the moot court competition, and they gave me and my moot court partners fits.

Billy was a great banjo picker. He worked at fishing and hunting shop in Tuscaloosa. He and Billy Church did pro bono apprentice legal work in the local courts, and gave local lawyers fits.

After law school, Billy Scruggs went back Fort Payne, his hometown in north Alabama, to be a country lawyer, fish and hunt, and keep playing his banjo. He jammed with a group of musicians he had grown up with. In time they became known as the band, Alabama. Billy became their lawyer. He helped them and himself make a whole lot of

money, in Sweet Home Alabama, which was not one of their songs, but maybe it should have been.

About a year ago, I traveled through Fort Payne and stopped for lunch at a diner and struck up a conversation with a local at the counter bar. I asked him if he had known Billy Scruggs? Yes, he had known MR. SCRUGGS. Then came stories that left me thinking Billy was a giant among men in his hometown.

Billy Church practiced law in Birmingham, and eventually ended up in a small town east of Birmingham, where he was a country lawyer of some renown, and took up and played a lot of golf, I heard.

I never became a country lawyer, and I didn't do all that great as a city lawyer, but I did write some interesting books based on my time as a city lawyer. And the four novels were a trip. Two were self-published: *KUNDALINA, ALABAMA* and *HEAVY WAIT: A Strange Tale*. Both can be found at online used bookstores.

CLOSING REMARKS

FROM TIME TO TIME, I'm asked if I still practice law? I say hardly a day goes by when I don't give someone legal advice, but I never charge money, nor even think about charging.

I sometimes say some of the legal advice I give is about human law, and some is about God Law.

I often say I spend a lot of time trying cases in God's Court, where everyone there is on trial, including me.

I don't always give good legal advice. I learn of that when I am corrected, or rebuked, in a dream, or by an unpleasant physical sensation, usually behind my left eye and in my left temple.

Sometimes the unpleasant sensation starts there and runs down into my left arm and hand.

Sometimes it runs further down into my left testicle, and that's ***really*** unpleasant.

The further down it runs, the more seriously off was my legal advice.

The same happens when I mess up in other ways.

The left side is the female side. She lets me know every time I trample her.

Recently, I went to a memorial service for a dear friend of my first wife, the mother of my children. It was a beautiful non-religious service. A great man, loved by many, had moved on.

My first wife asked me to go with her to a gathering at the widow's home. I said I didn't think so, I had come for the memorial service. The unpleasant sensation behind my left eye showed up. I said, OK, I changed my mind. The unpleasant sensation behind my left eye went away.

That led to conversation I needed to have with my first wife en route to the widow's home. The conversation was a good thing for us both.

We reached the widow's home. I hung out a little while, saw I had no reason to stay. I told my first wife I was leaving if she could get a ride home with someone at the gathering. She said she could. I told the widow I hoped she did not suffer too much loneliness, hugged her, and left. No unpleasant sensation behind my left eye. It was time for me to leave.

Part Three

Spontaneous Ramblings on Soul Alchemy

By a Southern Lawyer Who Became A Mystic

THIS THIRD IN A TRILOGY of free little books (see links at very end) presents slices of many interesting places Jesus, Archangel Michael and Melchizedek took and often dragged me kicking and screaming. Along the way, I met a whole lot of people, who had stepped onto the spiritual path having no clue what might lie in store. Some appeared to be in serious trouble, but did not realize it. Others were intrigued by my reports of supernatural experiences. Most, however, were not interested, and some thought I was crazy, or worse, or used mind-altering drugs, which I didn't do back then, nor since.

JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY
STARTING POINT

Star Date: September 7, 2019

MY BIRTHDAY, until I left grammar school.

Back then, a kid in his/her 6th year had to be born before October to enter public school 1st grade in Alabama. My mother got her delivering physician to make a second birth certificate, to show I was born September 7. She told me about it after there was nothing the school district could do about it. However, I already had learned of it from her mother, after I saw "Bash, 10-7-42" on her charm bracelet. My grandmother swore me to secrecy. I didn't tell my mother until she told me how old I really was.

My mother's parents were Southern Baptist. My father's parents, too. My mother detested the Baptist Church, and eventually she left it, to follow a young Episcopal minister. She took me and my younger brother and sister with her. The uproar in the family was awful. To prove she had done the right thing, my mother forced me through Confirmation. When the Episcopal bishop gave me the communion wine during the Confirmation service, it went down my throat wrong. I thought I was choking to death. I gutted it out, returned to my seat, said nothing. Perhaps a prediction of my ending up not being a church man. But then, as I told a North Georgia country lawyer friend in 2001, "When am I ever not in church?"

Yesterday, the former Roman Catholic self-styled mystic, spiritual teacher and healer Caroline Myss came into my thoughts, again. So, I went online and read what Wikipedia said about her, and some articles. One article and its reader comments were hugely critical of Myss' harsh and egotistical treatment of people. I never had dealings with Myss, although I think I recall writing to her once, at an address provided, and nothing came back.

I learned of Myss from a California friend in 1998, when I was in what I later would dub, "the black night of the soul." It had descended a couple of years after I emerged from a 4-year dark night of the soul, which had descended in early 1991, shortly after I was told in my sleep, "With respect to St. John of the Cross, you haven't seen anything yet." I then was engulfed in raw, black EVIL, which put me in terror and gagging and desperately trying to escape, which mood continued after I woke from the dream. I also awoke with an inflated ego, thinking I would prove John of the Cross had not seen anything yet.

The year prior, a licensed clinical social worker friend, who was somewhat familiar with my reports of having lots of not-of-this-word experiences, asked if I'd ever heard of John of the Cross? I said, No. He said I should read up on that Roman Catholic saint. I then found *ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, Alchemist of the Soul*, by Antonio T. De Nicholas, in the Boulder Bookstore on Pearl Street Mall, and read it.

The book included Juan de la Cruz's commentaries, in which he described two dark nights. One was awful, the cleansing of the soul, Juan called it, but it was doable by most people, who emerged permanently altered. For some dark night survivors, that was the end of it. For others, the second dark night, the cleansing of the spirit, eventually came. It was far worse and few survived it. After living through it, Juan was fused with God, and when he died, his body did not rot. He had become spiritual gold.

I was in the second dark night, praying to die and secretly plotting my suicide daily, when my California friend told me about a Myss' book, the title now escapes me, in which she described the dark night of the soul. I thought Myss summed it up okay, but she did not mention the second dark night. I told my friend that I did not think Myss had experienced either dark night. Nor, based on what I read about her yesterday and this morning online, do I think Myss experienced the death and rebirth Jesus called the baptism in fire and spirit, which descended on me after I came out of the black night, not in the least turned into spiritual gold, as far as I could tell.

That grueling baptism was administered from the spirit by Jesus, Archangel Michael, and the Eternal Order Melchizedek, in which the Letter to the Hebrews in the New Testament says Jesus is a high priest. Yet, it was not nearly as bad as the black night, which ran 16 terrible-beyond-imagining months, and started lifting when I left the woman I was with. Only to be put through the Melchizedek healing, deliverance from Evil, and death and rebirth program. Many deaths and rebirths and deliverances. Still in progress.

Before the black night, I had tried myriad treatment methods for a disabling bowel disturbance: medicine, psychotherapy, holistic diets, herbs, mineral cleansings, various forms of exercise, yoga, tai chi, chi kung, acupuncture, TM meditation, psychics, craniosacral therapy, Hakomi psychotherapy, Rolfing and other forms of bodywork, soul alchemy rituals taught to me by angels during the first dark night, shamans, Barbara Brennan hands of light healers, homeopathic medicine, crystal remedies, flower remedies, light spectrum remedies, radionics, affirmations, various diets, and many other kinds of healers and methods, at a great deal of expen$e.

Some things I tried seemed to help my bowel function, until something in me rejected what I was doing and I felt much worse until I stopped doing it. That's how I came to think what I wanted to overcome or get rid of in my bowel was intelligent and didn't like my meddling. So, I came to stop trying to treat it, and just lived with it. I came to see it ebbed and flowed with the inside and outside spiritual work being arranged for me to experience. I came to see it was rooted in poor choices I had made, which had damaged my internal feminine. In 2015, I met an interesting homeless woman I would run some interesting earth and heaven rivers with, who eventually suggested I add dried prunes and raw walnuts to my daily diet, and that helped my bowel function a lot.

Before the first dark night, I was experientially trained, as a patient-apprentice-therapist in a number of unconventional healing modalities, and during and following that time people found me, who viewed me as their only hope, a doctor of last resort. I seemed able to help those who were willing to do really intense inner work and deal with

their external human dramas in new ways. I did very little of that kind of healing work after the black night.

However, one time after the black night jumps out right now. A New Age reflexologist healer said the Spirit wanted me to work with her and some of her clients. One client was a psychiatrist. I asked her why she was seeking help? “Pain!,” she said. I asked her close her eyes and look inside of herself and ask the pain to show its physical location in her. She said the pain showed her where it was. She was surprised at its location. I asked her to ask the pain what it wanted from her? She asked and reported what the pain said it wanted. She was quite disturbed. The session ended and she left. Later, she called the reflexologist and said she was not coming back, she would seek other ways to get relief.

I once knew many people who would have worked with that psychiatrist in the same way I worked with her. However, I know of no one who would have worked with another client of that reflexologist like I did. After getting that client to go inside, we seemed to be getting somewhere, when she said she was going no further. She said already she had made a deal and in exchange was getting help in parts of her life that were important to her. She knew that I knew she had made a deal with the Devil, and she knew the reflexologist knew. I entreated the client not to go down that road. She said she was decided. She ended the session and left.

The reflexologist was freaked out. She was in the Melchizedek healing, deliverance and training program. She had told me when she was referred to me by Gloria Reiser, that she thought she would die if I could not help her. Could I help her? I said, yes, with God’s help, but she would have to die. Did she know what I meant? She said she did. Jesus, Michael and Melchizedek then went to work inside of her, and outside of her. She was shown things about herself she did not know. She was shown Evil actually exists, which she had not thought was true. It was really volatile for her. In just a couple of months, she was someone else entirely.

So, while I understand people wanting to be treated gently and kindly, and to become what they think is well, and to be happy, my myriad multi-dimensional experiences cause me to wonder if missing out on what that reflexologist and I were put through, and I still am being put through, cheats them out of experiencing what they might need much more than they can possibly imagine?

Many years after the black night, I had a lengthy email discussion with Antonio De Nicholas. I found him interesting and likable. He reported having the then pope’s ear, and he said he wondered why that was? But as we conversed, it became clear that De Nicolas was a skilled scribe and gifted poet, but he did not seem to have experienced the two dark nights, nor the baptism in spirit and fire death and rebirth.

As for Myss, my sense is she is adept at learning what people said or wrote, and she repackages it to make a living, but I do not think she has lived the spiritual healing and transformation she teaches. Myss held forth on Teresa de Avila’s inner castle work, but does Myss really do that work? And, was Teresa all that spiritually-transformed?

De Nicolas reported that Teresa and Juan were friends. They lived in the same Carmelite Order in Spain. Juan told Teresa that the voices she was hearing were not coming from God, and she did not take his warning to heart. Was Teresa influence by Lucifer, whom Juan warned in his commentaries might be behind any and all spiritual phenomena, thus best to ignore all spiritual phenomena?

Had I followed Juan's advice, my life would have gone very differently. I came to view the spiritual phenomena as parts of me either waking up or returning. Parts of me that I had lost, forgotten, thrown away, or did not even know existed.

A poem that fell out of me in the spring of 1994 seemed to sum it up.

Earth -
The sacred prism
through which souls are refracted
into their elemental parts,
purified in Holy Fire,
then one-forged
and sent on their way
to not even God knows where,
simply because they are all
unique emanations of God,
evolving

I imagine if Myss spent time with me and went inside and listened to what was anxious to speak with her, she might get really upset. She might get really mad at me. That happened in Santa Fe with a lady psychologist PhD, who also was a certified Jungian analyst, before I lived in Boulder.

I don't know if Myss wonders about Lucifer influencing her. It looks to me Lucifer is influencing most of humanity. I depend on my Melchizedek training and the angels who own me to advise me when I'm being duped by Lucifer and/or my demonic twin.

I can't help but wonder if humanity will be allowed to continue its current/historical avoidance of the baptism in fire and spirit, including meeting and dealing with the internal demonic twin, as was required of Jesus during his 40 days in the wilderness?

I can't help but wonder if, humanity, which is killing its planet home, and whose nuclear power disasters also are damaging other dimensions, is on the verge of being recycled, again, by angels?

I imagine putting every human being in the baptism of fire and spirit might prune humanity down to perhaps 50,000 individuals, a planet-saving reboot.

Why not, if every incarnated soul on this world sooner or later has to experience the baptism in fire and spirit death and rebirth to get off the karmic wheel and not have to come back?

Meanwhile, I get up each day and try to do the best I can with what comes before me. I think that is all anyone can do.

Postscript

AFTER I WROTE what I thought might be a finished draft of this chapter, Gloria Reiser emailed me:

> … regarding comments about Teresa, regardless of where she was spiritually, and I'm not one to claim anything regarding the source or the reasons for her experiences, though her writings are challenging to navigate, I've found entering my own Interior Castle and exploring there to be invaluable. And just as Teresa claims God/the Beloved/the Divine to be in the center, I believe at very least a higher wiser part of the Self resides there…. it not the Self, then perhaps the Aumakua (Wise Totally Trustworthy Male and Female Guardian Spirits) perhaps also known as Guardian Angels, or by a host of other names individuals have used through the aeons, and many many cultures and times, in attempts to understand and define that ultimate guiding wisdom source.

Then, Gloria emailed me:

> Sloan,
> Regarding Caroline Myss, have you viewed this?
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlDoc-_oyIE
> I've not watched all of it yet but once she gets beyond the first minute of complementing people and food, she speaks of her own transformation…. having Post Traumatic Workshop Syndrome, and at about 2 minutes in she claims she does not meditate, never has, never will. Doesn't do quiet moments, never has never will. She's all about prayer now - which to me is entwined with meditation…..
> I haven't had time to view the whole of this, but probably will a bit at a time in order to attempt to decipher what she is claiming to be about now.

Then Gloria texted me:

> Okay. I took time to watch the talk Caroline Myss made in Canada. She seems to be in the midst of a transition. Somethings she talked about I can relate to. I felt in few places she might have better stated, "This is my experience," rather than claiming it so for everyone. A few times she admits she is detached and unemotional. Even had folks laughing at the end about how she is. It's worth watching the speech. Something is with her. An awakening or transformation of sorts.

I emailed Gloria:

> My guts started feeling invaded yesterday afternoon, and it's worse at 6 a.m. this morning. Spirit poison. The only thing going on in my life yesterday and now, of which I am aware, which could provoke such a sensation, is Caroline Myss topic.
> Around the 21-minute mark in the video you provided, when Myss spoke of Teresa's inner castle work, I fell asleep. Leading up to then, I saw no haughtiness or meanness in Myss. If, as she said, she does not meditate, how can she do Teresa's inner castle work? How can she have the rich interior life she said she has? She told no details of her rich interior life. She said now she's into praying. But she did not say what she prays about. Where's the beef? Did she provide beef later in the video? I think the time to grab an audience, is at
> the outset. Give them pause for thought. Not ramble and ramble. I felt sorry for Myss. I read reader comments under the video. All oohs and ahs. There does seem to be something with Myss now. As if she has been stopped and is being redirected. But then, perhaps she is just recycling again, praying this time, what others did before her, so she could continue making money off it?
> I don't know. I'm not inside of her. I don't know if she dreams, or has visions, or hears voices directing and schooling her, or is stood before mirrors, and, if so, what she sees and hears. I think she's still in the baby pool. However, I will add this comment into what I wrote about her.

A homeless friend called me from Key West about 5 a.m. my time today. She said she had a dream she'd had before. I was on my big white horse. It and I were wearing shiny armor. I was using my big shiny sword to chop off a whole lot of people's heads. I had a big grin on my face. That dream reminds me of the art of Kali, who stands on Shiva's chest after she has chopped off a whole lot of men's heads. I figured she did not care for how men think. But the problem seems to reside in women, too. In the main.

ROSA MYSTICA,
THE BLACKSMITH,
RAINBOWS
AND REAL PEOPLE

THIS FELL OUT OF ME early 1994, in Boulder:

Rosa Mystica
Sweet Mystery
Bride of Christ
Living Water
without which
there are no rainbows
and God is dead.

I thought Rosa Mystica might be Mary Magdalene, an emanation from the Holy Spirit, and perhaps Cha, and, I hoped, a part of me.

Then, this came:

He feels deep beauty in the dark pool from which his writings flow. She clings to him like fine silk, precious oil. She feels solid, like … a black pearl, growing from inside out, ever larger with each stroke of his pen, pushing her precious waters over her banks into his dreams and life.

I figured that was The Muse.
This then leaped out of me.

Only fools rush in
where angels fear to tread,
but if there were no fools,
who'd lead the angels?

I thought that might be about Jesus. I went into a thrall. I felt something huge trying to wriggle its way into me. Marvelous feeling, divine ecstasy. And, a really tight squeeze. The thrall, wriggling and ecstasy went on for about two weeks.

Then, out for a regular morning walk, at the turnaround point to head home, I sensed angels around me. I heard, "This thing coming into you is your angel twin. All human beings have an angel twin, and yours will live out your life with you" Neat, I thought. "By the way, this is your son." I welled with emotion and nearly fell to the ground.

In late August of 1994, I dreamed of a terrible, black storm coming toward me. Waking, I saw a black blacksmith. Later same day, pen in hand, I recorded this:

I am the blacksmith,
this storm is my forge.
You are the carbon gemsteel
I hammer into my black diamond laser-sword,
to split lightning and thunder
and slice rain, sleet and hail
into things of beauty.

In May of 1995, this fell out of me over breakfast one morning:

Shaman you now are.
Angels walk beside you
and call you their brother,
even as you curse the heavens
for making you one
who wields the lightning.
Be kind to your brothers and sisters,
but take no prisoners
Kill them all in my name,
as I have killed you,
So that they, and you,
might live.

I thought the voice was the blacksmith. I thought I had arrived. Heh, it was only getting started.

My life in Boulder melted down. I booked a flight from Bolder to Nepal, to trek. I left on September 11, 1995, the day after the 28thanniversary of my son's funeral.

I was really out of shape. Creeping up the foot trail, carrying a small backpack, I passed in the shadow of Fish Tail Mountain, where gods were said to live and foreigners were not allowed to roam.

When I finally reached Anapurna Base Camp at about 15,000 feet, it was socked in. I waited for the weather to clear, so I could see the sun rise over Fish Tail and light up a rim of peaks that dwarfed the Colorado Rockies.

As the sun struck that towering rim on the third morning, I sensed something coming. The blacksmith, huge, standing before the towering peaks, looking down at me. I dropped to one knee, hoping I might hear, "The Father and I are one." Me, the son. Heh. Instead, I heard, "The son and I are one." The blacksmith was Jesus. Heh, I had traveled half-way around the world to be shown that.

Then, I was sent to Australia, where I had long thought I wanted to live. I landed in Darwin, a northern seaport named after Charles Darwin. I checked into the local youth

hostel and booked a 3-day tour into Kakadu, in the outback, where I had read part of the first "Crocodile Dundee" movie was filmed.

It was me and six or seven amicable white Australians and two young white Australian guides, all half my age, in two what today are called SUVs. After visiting several interesting sites, and being swarmed by billions of flies, which did not bite, and having dinner, we were racing down a wash-boarded dirt road, toward a state park campsite. I was in the back with three other clients.

Before me appeared from dream time two Aborigines, a man and a woman, somewhat younger than I. Only I saw them. At that time, it was my habit to ask visitors from the spirit world what I had that they wanted? I asked them telepathically. They laughed, said telepathically, "We are Real People, what could you have that we want?" I grimaced, chuckled, asked, "Well, then, why did you come?" They said, "To welcome you into our tribe." Tears welled, my heart heaved. The Aborigines dissolved back into dreamtime.

I knew they were from the wild aborigine tribe describe in Marlo Morgan's electrifying book, *MUTANT MESSAGE DOWN UNDER*. Her report of a spontaneous walkabout with a wild aborigine tribe, after she went to Australia ostensibly to present at a mental health conference of some kind.

I had read Morgan's book in Boulder a few years prior and felt in my soul it was genuine, even if some details had been altered to protect the identity and location of the tribe from civilized government and its ways.

Morgan reported that the tribe was telepathic, and spoke with their mouths in her presence, because she was not telepathic. Some of them had never lived in civilization. Others had, but realized they were losing their essence and returned to the tribe and were restored.

They got up each morning and waited on a sign to point their direction of travel that day. A snake crossing before them, a bird in the air, a kangaroo going somewhere, the direction of the wind.

They helped each other see themselves more clearly.

The dreaming (dreamtime) was reality, what happened on this world was distortion.

They called themselves, The Real People, and they called civilized people, mutants. They had chosen to stop reproducing children and leave this planet, and wished the mutants well.

One of the tribe members had a soul contract to try to help Morgan, and the entire tribe was participating in that effort. After doing what they could for Morgan, they brought her back to civilization with a message for mutants.

Morgan self-published *MUTANT MESSAGE DOWN UNDER* out of her basement with her son's and a copying machine's help. It created a sensation in America. Sold several hundred thousand copies. I called the Morgan home one day and spoke with the son and said it was a wonderful book.

A major publishing company bought the book and republished it as fiction, because Morgan declined to provide any proof that the tribe actually existed. Morgan's

introduction to the republished book told readers, who wanted to know, what she thought about that.

I then read in several publications that *MUTANT MESSAGE* was poorly received in mainstream and aborigine Australia. Morgan was accused of having made it all up, and apologies were demanded. She said she was sorry that people were offended, but she could not say she made it all up.

I myself was more interested in whether Morgan was able to be a real person in mainstream, for it looked to me she perhaps was drifting back into its ways. Real People recognize each other, but mutants do not recognize Real People.

After the three days in the outback, I wondered what I was supposed to do? I had a 6-months visa in Australia, where I had thought I might roam for a while. Yet, I felt perhaps that was not in store for me.

I was eating nights at a restaurant across the street from the hostel. Over a meal, I asked for guidance. Onto the restaurant's music system came, "The Dawning of the Age of Aquarius". Then, "Sweet Home Alabama."

I booked a flight on an interior airline to Sydney, with connection on Qantas to Los Angeles, via Auckland, New Zealand, another country where I had thought I might wish to live. I called the Sidney youth hostel and reserved the last bed they had for the night I would arrive.

Arriving at the Sydney hostel, I checked in, put my backpack on my bunk, and returned to the front desk and asked if there was a pub nearby where an old person could go and not get his ears blasted by loud music? The fellow at the front desk told me there was such a pub about three blocks up the street.

As I entered the pub, "Sweet Home Alabama" came onto the music system. I had planned to spend a month in New Zealand. I spent one night. I was being sent back to Alabama, where it all had begun, to see if I could be a real person in mainstream society.

Oh me, oh my.

The black night came and went.

The baptism in fire and spirit came and continued.

Years passed.

It dawned on me that what had wriggled into me after the-fools-rush-in poem came, was Jesus, and perhaps my son, who had died for me, too.

Heh, it was only getting started.

Heh, maybe it's still only getting started.

Meanwhile, my mysterious friend, Young Prophet, told me last night of a string of dreams he had the night before, of him, me, Archangel Michael and an elder black man doing a walkabout in the outback, traveling between watering holes shown to the black man by the Aborigine snake god. The elder black man and Michael were instructing Young Prophet and me.

I told Young Prophet about my time in Kakadu. He said that years before we met in early 2017, he dreamed of me doing a walkabout in the outback with a black man.

I said I had read in Boulder of NASA losing one of its satellites and an aborigine had walked into a NASA tracking station somewhere in Australia and had told them where to look in the sky for the satellite. They looked there and found the satellite.

Young Prophet said he also had read of an aborigine telling NASA where to look for the lost satellite, and the aborigine and his family and tribe were asked to pose for photos and they declined because that was against their ways.

The rainbow serpent is an Australian Aborigine god. I saw an ancient drawing of the rainbow serpent on a rock wall during the Kakadu tour.

On September 12, 1993, the 26th anniversary of my son's funeral a stunning cosmic eulogy poem fell out of me. That poem is lost, but not fragments from a poem that soon followed.

Rainbows know no master.
Fueled by Father Sun,
Rainbows paint heavens beautiful,
make angels sing,
and touch Misty Earth
only Heaven knows where.
Rainbows are more sparkling than diamonds,
more precious than pearls,
more brilliant than gold.
Rainbows are you, and me,
full spectrums of Infinity
blazing across Eternity.
Rainbow are now.

And this poem:

White is black,
Black is white,
When they fuse,
Rainbows bloom.

And this poem.

The Tree of Life grows not on the battleground of good and evil, but in a quite meadow, beside a gentle stream, under a beautiful rainbow that knows not right or wrong.

My take away: The Real People are rainbow people, who enjoy the original soul consciousness of humanity. They live in "Eden". That is seen in *MUTANT MESSAGE DOWN UNDER*.

Young Prophet had a sequel dream of him and me being with Michael and the elder black aborigine. We were at a cliff by the sea. There was a waterfall and a village of

thatched huts. No people were visible. Michael told us to look carefully for people there. Then, we saw people. Real People. The elder aborigine said, perfection is for God, we should focus on seeing Real People. Young Prophet said, but what's the point if there are only two of us? The elder aborigine said, even if there were only one person, it needs to be done.

Marlo Morgan reported that when she asked The Real People about Jesus, they said he was a good man who came to try to help mutants. While I deeply appreciate The Real People, it was the long, progressing baptism in fire and spirit, administered by Jesus, Michael and Melchizedek, which changed me.

I see the same happening to Young Prophet. I saw the same happen to the New Age reflexologist woman referred to me by Gloria Reiser, and to a non-practicing Jewish New Age guru male friend of mine before that.

From time to time, I told people, and published on my blogs, that people born into Christianity, who went searching elsewhere for help, were trying to find the Jesus they could not find in Christendom, and what they needed to do was seek the real Jesus.

Meanwhile, perhaps I am to follow Marlo Morgan's lead and self-publish these spontaneous ramblings? Young Prophet told me that is easy to do today. He's a wizard with IT stuff. But then, I self-published quite a few times and prefer go straight to a major publishing company, for a change - and stay out of way, this time.

We plan, God laughs!

God's will, not mine, be done.

SEEKING VS. BEING CAPTURED BY GOD

Star Date: September 26, 2019.

IN SOME CIRCLES, 26 is the number for God.

I heard from time to time: "Better not begin the spiritual path, than to begin and then try to get out of it."

I also heard what I supposed came from the Sufi branch of Islam, "Let God kill him who himself does not know and yet presumes to show others the ways to the door of His kingdom."

I reported earlier in these ramblings that, after I figured out that practicing law in my hometown, Birmingham, Alabama, was not working, nor was anything else, I moved from to Santa Fe, New Mexico in early 1986. Hoping. Things. Would. Get. Better. What happened, however, was got a whole lot different, and better took on an entirely new meaning, after Jesus and Michael woke me up in the wee hours and said I would be pushed to my limits, but I had asked for it, and they were going to give it to me. I was jolted three times by spiritual lighting, and it's fair to say it was all over but a whole heap of shouting for pretty much the rest of my life, so far.

In September 1987, I moved from Santa Fe to Boulder, Colorado, and sometimes drove down to Santa Fe for a visit. I vividly recall one such trip to see friends I had met in Jay Sherer's massage and natural healing school, and to see a couple I had met during an earlier trip to Jimez, situated on a back road from Albuquerque to Los Alamos. The woman in that couple was a massage therapist, New Age energy healer. The man was into Zen and chop wood, carry water. They were to drive from Jimez to Santa Fe, to have dinner with me and my then wife.

For something to do that afternoon, I went to St. Francis' Cathedral on the town square. I read an inscription out front, that Francis was the patron saint of New Mexico. How could I have lived in Santa Fe for most of two years and not known that? I entered the church, sat in a pew in the beautiful nave, and was taken over by something enormous. My heart cracked open. I wept and heaved openly. It went on quite a while.

Leaving the cathedral, I read St. Francis' prayer again, displayed in a marquis outside the church.

Lord make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope

Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy
O divine master grant that
I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life

Amen.

Over dinner that night, I told my Jimez friends a little about what had happened in the Cathedral. They said a Sufi teacher was in Santa Fe, and they were going to see him the next morning. Would I like to join them? Sure.

After breakfast the next morning, I went back into St. Francis' cathedral. Whatever was there the day before, was still there. More weeping and heaving. I left the church and walked toward the rendezvous point where my friends would pick me.

I realized angels were around me. I heard in my mind, "Stay on your toes, something interesting is going to happen, and don't mess it up like you did another time." I remembered a time I had messed up something important that came to me from the spirit world.

My friends arrived. I got into the backseat and off we went to a north Santa Fe suburb where the Sufi was staying in the home of one of his American students.

After parking the car out front, we went to the front door and knocked. A white American woman opened the door into a mostly bare living room, with sitting cushions along the walls. She told us to have a seat, and asked for our first names, which we provided. She walked toward the back of the home. We three sat down and heard the woman speaking in a foreign language. We heard a man respond in a foreign language. We heard our names.

The woman returned to the living room, said, "He wants to see Sloan first."

My friends seemed somewhat startled. I shrugged, got up and followed the woman into a room where sat on a cushion a white-bearded man much older than my nearly 50 years.

The woman introduced me to the Sufi and him to me, in English and the foreign language. Then, she translated what he said to me and I said back to him, as follows.

He asked why I had come to see him? I said I wasn't sure, a married couple, who were friends of mine and were his students, had invited me.

He asked what I knew about Sufism? While I knew a good bit about Sufism for a white guy from Alabama, my mind went blank.

He said Sufism is the way of the heart. I said I actually knew that but had been unable to speak. I was ever thinking about the alert that something interesting was going to happen.

He said I had come so he could teach me about Sufism and God.

I said I knew quite a few people who had lit up when they met their spiritual teacher. They wept, had goosebumps. The Sufi said not to measure myself by other people. I agreed, thanked him.

The Sufi said plumbers, carpenters and electricians have a human teacher to learn those trades. Likewise, a person needs a human spiritual teacher to learn about God.

I related what had happened to me the day before, and again that morning, in St. Francis' cathedral. The Sufi said God opened my heart in the cathedral and sent me to him, the Sufi, to be taught the way of the heart and about God.

I said I was not sure about that. What about St. Francis?

After having a vision of thee Christ, Francis went through a near-death illness/dark night, and when he came out of it, he was someone else entirely.

The Sufi said he did not know who was Francis' spiritual teacher. I said, Francis had no spiritual teacher. God came directly to him.

In that moment, a presence appeared in our midst. Tears filled my eyes, goosebumps covered my arms, back and neck.

Knowing the Sufi was aware of the presence. I looked at him, showed him my arms, said, "You see?"

Silence.

I thanked the Sufi.

He said I should thank God, not him.

I said, Yes, that was correct.

I thanked God, told the Sufi I had gotten what I had come for, and he had people waiting, who needed to see him.

I rose to leave, said, "God be with you." The Sufi said the same to me.

I went into the kitchen, where I found my friends. I was trembling. The woman put her hands on me, energy work, trying to calm me down. I told her, please don't, she would mess it up. I said I needed to leave, could they take me back into town? They said, OK.

I felt badly that I had pulled them away from seeing the Sufi, but I felt something really important had happened, which might be more important than them seeing the Sufi.

Over lunch, for which I paid, I told them what had happened when I was with the Sufi. I expected them to get it. They didn't get it. They said they were worried about me. I wondered how that was possible?

I had a number of later interactions with the couple. Then, they broke up. He eventually ended up in Boulder.

I took him to Boulder Creek one day, and taught him a soul alchemy ritual the angels had given to me not long before.

Basically, the ritual consisted of him closing his eyes and asking God, or whatever, to be shown what he needed to see right then. To wait, until something showed up.

He waited a good while longer than most people had waited, whom I had taught the ritual.

Then, something showed up. He was elated. He had never had anything like that happen.

I told him to stick with it and to ask if there was anything else he needed to be shown? Something came, which seemed to be a symbolic catalyst, or spirit medicine, for what he first was shown.

He remained elated, and yet seemed mystified. I said he had opened a door, and he could use that ritual anytime he wished, or not, but things were going to change for him.

He left Boulder not long after that. I don't know how it then went for him or for his former lady. I don't remember if I taught her the soul alchemy ritual. Perhaps I did. I taught it to quite a few people in Boulder.

Back then, and later, as I was turned upside down and every which a way but loose in many ways by spirit forces that had captured me, and by other forces, I had a really hard time being St. Francis' prayer. I still have a really hard time being that prayer.

It looks to me that Francis was fast-tracked through death and rebirth, and then God put him to work that greatly impacted the Roman Catholic Church and that part of Christendom.

I was not fast-tracked. Or, if I was, I fell off the tracks. In any event, I was put to work, and as far as I can tell, most of it was the sound of one hand clapping.

I wonder what the Sufi teacher in Santa Fe might have thought about the legendary Sufi poet, Rumi, who seemed to have a direct line to something a bit larger than himself? Or, was Rumi's famous chickpea poem about his own spiritual teacher, Shams?

Chickpea to Cook Rumi – Translated by Coleman Barks

A chickpea leaps almost over the rim of the pot where it's being boiled. 'Why are you doing this to me?' The cook knocks him down with the ladle. 'Don't you try to jump out. You think I'm torturing you. I'm giving you flavor, so you can mix with spices and rice and be the lovely vitality of a human being. Remember when you drank rain in the garden. That was for this.' Grace first. Sexual pleasure, then a boiling new life begins, and the Friend has something good to eat. Eventually the chickpea will say to the cook, 'Boil me some more. Hit me with the skimming spoon. I can't do this by myself. I'm like an elephant that dreams of gardens back in Hindustan and doesn't pay attention to his driver. You're my cook, my driver, my way into existence. I love your cooking.' The cook says, 'I was once like you, fresh from the ground. Then I boiled in time, and boiled in the body, two fierce boilings. My animal soul grew powerful. I controlled it with practices, and boiled some more, and boiled once beyond that, and became your teacher.'

Likewise, these Rumi verses:

What you call love
is but subtle degrees of domination;

Love is like the moon in the window,
It's just there.

Beyond good and evil is a field,
and I will meet you there.

Imagine what Islam would be like to day, if it embraced Rumi and Shams.

Imagine what Christendom would be like today, if it embraced Francis of Assisi and Jesus.

At the suggestion of Boulder, Colorado street people in 1993, who seemed really interested in what I told them of some of my mystical adventures (they had a hard time accepting were not chemically-induced), I rented and watched "Brother Son Sister Moon", about Francis of Assisi and his childhood girlfriend, Claire.

In the film, Francis was in a church service, when Jesus on the cross statue stared down at him and he then went into a swoon and then came long illness. After the illness lifted, Francis realized he no longer had any desire to work in his merchant father's business. He went into the business and started tossing free merchandise out windows onto the street for townspeople to take for free. This really disturbed Francis' father. Francis undressed down to butt naked in the town center and gave his clothes to the local priest and left the town. When Francis' father lamented this to the priest, the priest said he was powerless. Francis had chosen to follow Jesus, literally. Already, Jesus had asked Francis in a vision to help him rebuild his church. Francis found an old broken-down church in the countryside and started restoring it, stone by stone. Slowly, people who had known him, joined him. Claire joined him. They took vows of poverty and celibacy, all of them. The church membership grew. Soon Francis' congregation was larger than the town's church congregation. Then, a lot larger. The bishop sent soldiers to burn Francis' church. Francis was so distraught, that he, accompanied by two Franciscan brothers he had grown up with, walked barefooted all the way to Rome, so Francis could ask the pope why God hated him, that his church was burned? One of Francis' traveling companions tried to school Francis on how to address the pope properly. However, when they entered the great hall where the pope sat on a throne surrounded by religious men clad in refined clothing and hats with bird plumage, Francis recited the passage about the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, and what God had provided for them to wear. The righteous men around the pope were outraged. The pope, played by the actor who was Obi Wan Kenobi in "Star Wars") seemed smitten, said, sometimes we forget. The pope came down off his throne and walked to Francis. The pope said he wanted to kiss Francis' hand, which he did. The pope looked skyward, and, as if struck by something, said he wanted to kiss Francis' feet, which he did.

As recorded Roman Catholic Church history, after many years of being a monk with a huge following of Franciscan brothers and sisters Claire, Francis had a revelation of something enormous and precious headed his way. The physical wounds of Christ on the cross then appeared on Francis' body. Soon after, he left this life. That was the earliest

report of anyone receiving what became called, “The Stigmata”. Francis was the only person recognized to have received all the physical wounds Jesus suffered on the cross.

GURUS

I MET MANY PEOPLE in Santa Fe and Boulder, and elsewhere, who had a spiritual guru, which means, teacher. Most usually, a yogi in India. Each of those people seemed to me, to be possessed by their guru. As if the guru was inside of them, an integral part of them. Even people who had left their guru still seemed so possessed.

In Boulder, there was a Tibetan Buddhist Rinpoche (very high lama), who had founded an internationally famous college and temple. He had a large congregation in Boulder. It was known in Boulder that this Rinpoche was an alcoholic, and he had sex with many of his male and female parishioners. After he died of liver disease, his hand-picked Anglo-American successor continued those practices. The successor contract HIV and did not tell his parishioners, with whom he was having sex. A number of them contracted HIV. It made the local and national news. That Buddhist community split in half. One half separated. The other half was outraged it had been made public, said it was a karma thing the victims needed to experience.

The New Age reflexologist referred to me in 1999 by Gloria Reiser, told me she thought she would die if I could not help her. Could I help her? I said, yes, with God's help. But she would have to die. Did she know what I meant? She said she thought she did. Cathy said her birth family had had nothing to do with religion. I sent her some things I had written. Shortly, she reported that Jesus and Michael had trapped her in her living room, and onto a wall was projected:

INAPPROPRIATE
SEXXUAL
BEHAVIOR
FATHER

The walls in Cathy's home started bending. Demons flew in and out of the fireplace and chimney windows. She was terrified. She heard that her father had sex with her from age three to age eighteen, when she left her parents' home and never returned. She said she had no memory of having sex with her father, but she had known she had to leave her parents' home and never return, and that is what she did at age eighteen.

Then commenced about three weeks of volatile angel healing inside of her. Several sessions a day, while I basically held her hand. The year before, I had been treated to angel healing of being molested by my mother in my crib. My mother had been tortured emotionally and psychically by her Puritan Baptist parents. She was damaged psychically and in her natural sexual expression.

I had no recollection of the incest. The healing was about three weeks, two to three spontaneous sessions a day. I relieved each infraction energetically. It was violent and terrifying beyond human comprehension. A close friend had been given what seemed like

perfect audio spirit reception. He told me what he was hearing from the angels during each of their healing sessions on me. I don't know how I could have gotten through it without his help.

Cathy emerged from her incest healing, a new person. She reported Melchizedek also was now with her. She had perfect spirit vision, hearing and empathy. If the angels wished, she saw, heard and felt everything in someone near her. Peachy.

Cathy said the angels told her that she and I were supposed to be together. I said it was therapeutic transference, and I was with a woman I wanted to grow old and die with. Cathy said, okay. The next day, she said the angels told her to wait and see. A couple of days later, the lady I wanted to live out my days with was told in her sleep, lying beside me, "You are not the one." It scared the shit out of her. She was a regular churchgoer. She sometimes heard from God. She knew it was over between us.

Cathy once had a yogi guru from India, who, based on what she told me of him, was an okay man. He did not have sex with his students. He tried to help them evolve. She eventually left him, but she still missed him, even though he had died. She dreamt of him one night, sitting above her head in the lotus position, sucking energy out of her head (crown chakra) into his pelvis (root chakra). When she told me about it the next morning, I said that needed to stop. I told her I was going to talk and she should report to me what she saw and heard. I told the guru he needed to get on with his life. He was holding her and himself back. He had far more important things to be doing. I asked Jesus and Michael to deal with it. She said Jesus and Michael were taking her guru away. She started crying. Her heart heaved. I said it needed to happen.

Later that year, Cathy and I were told to travel. We had very little money, and some credit cards we used to get cash advances. By and by, we spent a while in South Africa. Then, we made plans to go to Mumbai, India. After applying for visas at the Indian Consulate in Durban, we went to an Indian restaurant to commemorate the trip. When the food came, Cathy took one bite and said she was about to throw up. She raced to the bathroom and threw up and then went into dry heaves. We left the restaurant. We changed our airline reservations to spend 30 days layover in Mauritius, instead of 3 days, and 3 days in India, instead of 30.

Mauritius was quite nice, except for on interlude, which started when I began hearing there was an evil greater than Lucifer. After about three days of hearing that, Cathy told me she heard from Michael, "If Sloan can imagine an evil greater than Lucifer, then it exists. That night, Jesus and his mother came to Cathy as we were lying in bed. They told Cathy that, when Jesus was young, his mother had molested him. I was enraged, not because it had happened, incest was as common back then as it was in 2000, but because I knew the terrible havoc keeping it secret had wreaked in the collective soul of Christendom and its members.

Just as the fantasy that Jesus' mother was a virgin had wreaked similar havoc.

As had the fantasy that Jesus was celibate. If Magdalene publicly washed his feet with her tears and hair, and then anointed his feet with precious ointment she scarce could afford, what did she wash and anoint him with when they were in private?

I figured what Cathy was told by Jesus and his mother explained why he spoke pejoratively to and of her in the Gospels.

The next day, or perhaps the day after, white-hot, painful lesions formed inside Cathy's thighs, just below her vagina. Over the next few days the lesions grew in size and the pain increased. We understood this was the result of what Cathy had been told by Jesus and his mother. It was that spirit poison manifest in the flesh.

It dawned on me that we needed to make love. Cathy was not receptive. I said it would help her move the spirit poison out of her. She relented. We made love, slowly. She was passive. It was beautiful. She had a really powerful orgasm. The lesions began to shrink. In a few days they were gone.

It was time to go to India. At the Mumbai airport, we rented a taxi and I asked the driver if he could take us to an affordable hotel near the waterfront? He said he could. Going into the city, we passed acres and acres of scarcely-clothed homeless people in very close quarters, clad in rags, sitting and lying on mud, towels, sheets, cardboard. Cathy said all she saw in the air was serpents. I said, not the nice kind of serpents seen on Saturday morning cartoons? No, not that kind of serpents, she said.

We both felt ill those three days, like we had absorbed a dark malaise. We went into the nearby Taj Mahal Hotel, where the very rich stayed. The front desk said a room for two was $1,500 US a night. We were paying $50 a night two blocks away on the waterfront. We were very glad to leave India. After spending the night in the Tokyo airport motel, we felt much better. We flew to Hawaii, where the credit card companies figured out what we were doing and cut of off and we became homeless. On the bright side, the credit card companies did not cut us off in South Africa, Mauritius or India.

There are many ways to grow close to God, but it looks to me that the fast-tract as safest way is the way Francis of Assisi was given. The way Cathy and I were given.

Being taken over by something much bigger and incomprehensible, and instructed, disciplined and changed.

Is that not what happened to guru Jesus? Is that not what happened to his disciples? He planted seeds, which sprouted after The Holy Spirit seized the disciples at Pentecost and grew them into gurus God could use.

The Work

IN PERHAPS 1985, I read G.I. Gurdjieff's *Meetings With Remarkable Men*, in which he reports the once young seeker of spiritual mysteries, himself, having once stumbled across a dervish with his students in the countryside. A dervish was an Islamic holy man. Or, a Sufi. A mystic.

Gurdjieff joined the group and listened to the dervish speak to his students. By and by, Gurdjieff asked the dervish, "What about breathing practices?". The dervish said there was something to breathing practices, but Gurdjieff should not attempt them, or he might be injured.

After listening to the dervish a while longer, Gurdjieff announced that he chewed each bite of his food 100 times before swallowing it. The dervish asked Gurdjieff if that was something he had read in a book? Gurdjieff said it was. The dervish told Gurdjieff that much chewing would weaken his stomach and cause more problems. He should be eating bones and cracking them with his teeth and swallowing, to make his stomach strong.

The dervish addressed the entire group: "Let God kill him who himself does not know and yet presumes to show others the way to the door of His kingdom."

After many years of blindly searching for hidden truths, Gurdjieff was invited into a secret sect and was blindfolded and taken on horseback to a remote mountain spiritual community somewhere in the Middle East or Eurasia, where he finally began his spiritual journey. It was said by people I then knew that the secret sect perhaps were Sufis.

What most stuck out for me in Gurdjieff's report of some of his experiences in that secret community was one of the brothers telling Gurdjieff and other newcomers of two very old members of the brotherhood, like, maybe hundreds of years old, who came around from time to time. They spoke to the brothers until it was time for them to go elsewhere.

One of the ancient brother's spoke so eloquently that they hung on his every word. The other ancient brother mumbled and they hardly understood anything he said to them. After the ancient teachers left, the brothers gathered to discuss it. They learned that they recalled very little of what the eloquent elder had said, because he had spoken to them from his mind. But they remembered nearly everything the mumbling elder had said, because he had spoken to them from his being.

Although I already was reading stuff I'd never heard about in school or church, I suppose *Meetings With Remarkable Men* had quite an effect on me in ways I did not yet recognize.

Same for Gurdjieff's first book, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, which I think I read in 1989. Posing as a repentant, wizened-by-many-years Beelzebub, Gurdjieff undertakes to teach his grandson, Gurdjieff's students and any other readers, all and everything.

Beelzebub told his grandson that human beings are three-brain beings: mind, heart, will, and all three brains needed developing.

A fellow by pen name A.H. Almas wrote several books about The Work, as Gurdjieff and some Sufis and other people called personal spiritual development. My experience with Alamas and some of his students was they were mostly working on the will center.

There work was similar to what I read in *A COURSE IN MIRACLES*, which was channeled. Whenever something happens that disturbs you, do not react, do not try to fix or change it. Just let the feelings have you and let it run its course. Do that as an ongoing practice. You will change.

What jumped out most at me in *Beelzebub's Tales* was he told his grandson that, of all the great saints who had lived on this planet, the one whose teachings had the most chance of helping humanity, was St. Jesus (who had promoted resist not one who does evil, turn the other cheek, pray for and do good to your enemies).

When I mentioned that to the Birmingham, Alabama friend, who had turned me onto Gurdjieff, she looked like she had been poked by a cattle prod. When I treated her to a demonstration of some of the healing therapies I had learned in Santa Fe and Boulder, she got really emotional. That disturbed her. She was not accustomed to crying and trembling. I thought there was a great deal in her, which her long devotion to Gurdjieff and participating in groups led by elders in the Gurdjieff movement had left untouched: very serious disturbances in her body, emotions, mind and soul.

I liked best Gurdjieff's third book, *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I Am': All and Everything*..., which I recall reading in 1991. Gurdjieff spoke directly to the reader about his own experiences of trying to impart to people what he had learned. Finally, the reader gets to know the grown-up Gurdjieff. The book stops in mid-sentence, because Gurdjieff died before it was completed.

What most jumped out at me was Gurdjieff said the most important thing for any person is to go whole hog at whatever he/she undertakes. Gurdjieff lamented that he had hoped his writings would help humanity change, but what he had discovered was only his most advanced students had benefited. When I mentioned that to the friend who had turned me on to Gurdjieff, she said she had gotten a great deal out of Gurdjieff's books.

I think it was in 1993 that I stumbled across *On a Spaceship with Beelzebub* in Boulder Bookstore on Pearl Street. I read the jacket copy and bought it. The author, a professional writer, reported his lengthy experiences in two Gurdjieff communities. One was in New York, the other in the Pacific northwest.

Besides the author's gripping candor about himself, what most jumped out at me was his reports of just how difficult it was for him to leave each group. Especially, the resistance of the Gurdjieff community leaders letting him leave. As if he was committing heresy. As if he was being detained by invisible jealous spirit forces, while liberating invisible spirit forces were assisting his departures. Cults kept coming into my thoughts. Same had come to my thoughts about powerful yogis in India, the Rinpoche in Boulder, and many Christian churches I had spent time in and had heard about.

I recommended *On A Spaceship With Beelzebub* to several people involved in Gurdjieff groups.

Before that book was published, I met two people involved in a Gurdjieff spin-off group in Boulder. One, a man, tried to recruit me. The other, a woman, asked me to help her leave the group. The man eventually seemed to brag that he and the leader of the group, another man, were lovers. The woman didn't speak of sex, but she did accuse me of wanting to have sex with her, perhaps? I said I was married and wasn't attracted to her and was trying to help her wean from the group. As far as I knew, she stayed away from the group, and it was not easy for her.

I never got the sense such sexual practices went on in the Birmingham Gurdjieff community. Nor was there mention of such sexual practices in Gurdjieff's books. It appeared to me that Gurdjieff, although capable of being quite the rascal in his business practices, preying on people's gullibility, was a genuine God-seeker, who made earnest efforts to wake people up. I felt I got a great deal from his books. Yet, I knew from reading his books, and from my personal dealings with people in Gurdjieff communities, that what had gotten ahold of me was very different.

The friend, who had turned me onto Gurdjieff, had a difficult time with the notion that I was being taught angels. She told me that she discussed it with her Gurdjieff teacher from New York City, who sometimes came down to Birmingham. He said there was a school which held to that approach, but that was not the Gurdjieff way.

Already mentioned, she and her Gurdjieff teacher, and Gurdjieff, called what they were about, "The Work." Secret code for conscious spiritual evolution. Sufis I met called it "The Work." The founder of Sandplay Therapy, the Swiss Jungian Analyst Dora Kalff, whom I was fortunate to get to know and call a friend, knew of The Work in a private conversation I had with her in Zurich, in 1988. It appeared to me that Dora had a direct line to something a lot bigger than herself.

Just when I felt this chapter was finished, I received a happy birthday greeting via Facebook messenger from the daughter of the now deceased Birmingham Gurdjieff community founder. She enlightened my ignorance. Gurdjieff had a reputation of having sex with and impregnating his female students. I checked that out online and found she was correct. I told her that I wondered why her father and other members of his Gurdjieff community never mentioned it? She said perhaps they did not know. I said I imagined they knew but did not care to broadcast it. I told her she had saved me a lot of grief, just in the nick of time. I did not tell her, that just before she wished me happy birthday, I had tried several times to email a draft of this chapter to Young Prophet. None of the emails went through. I wondered what that was about? There are no coincidences.

THE RAZOR'S EDGE

Star Date: October 7, 2019 (my 77th birthday)

DREAMS NUDGED ME TO PUBLISH this yesterday at:
afoolsworkneverends.blogspot.com. the razor's edge living, politics and 2020 hurricane season in Key West

It's Sunday, October 6, 2019.

I had hoped I was done writing about Key West and its righteous ways.

Heh.

Two nights ago, Friday, my homeless lady friend called me from the sheriff's jail on Stock Island, Key West. Her one free phone call. She said she had been arrested by KWPD for camping in public. She was sitting on a blanket, waiting to watch a high school football game just about to start. I told her, as long as she's in Key West, city police will keep arresting her and putting her in the sheriff's jail.

As I walked somewhere yesterday morning (Saturday), I passed a fellow with a long, white beard and white, wavy hair, who said, "Is that you, Sloan?" I didn't recognize him. Said so. He told me his name. I said I didn't recognize the long, white beard. Great seeing you. What are you doing in Alabama? J said he came to attend the wedding of a friend's son, and was out for a morning stroll. He had been one of my best vicious van dweller friends in Key West, until city police started threatening to jail them for hanging out at Higgs Beach. Jail them, because their vehicles were their homes. Their only homes. I told J about my homeless friend being in jail, again, this time for sitting on a blanket at a football game. Camping.

Key West was making America great again long before Donald Trump ever dreamed he would try his hand at it.

J and I talked about all sorts of things, like we did at Higgs Beach. Joe is medically disabled. He also is really smart. Looks into many things. A real skeptic. Remains convinced 911 was an inside job. As do I.

J talked about the real power people controlling everything behind the scenes. People whose names are never seen or heard in public. A secret cabal. I said, yes, those people exist. They have been called "The Illuminati." J said the cabal knows they need to keep creating conflict, having two dogs barking at each other, then two more dogs barking each other, to distract the masses. Without the two dogs barking, the masses might be able to rest, think about things, wake up to what is really going on.

J told a few cabal stories. Dropped some cabal names. George Washington. Ben Franklin. Dick Cheney. I could have added the first President Bush. I mentioned Donald Trump. J said Trump's in the cabal mix. I didn't say all of them are well known.

I said there is something going on right now, which does not involve the cabals. I looked at the weather forecast on my I-phone, said, it will be 93 degrees here today. It was

95 the past few days. In October. J said maybe the cabal has a way to heat things up. I said this never happened here before. J said I could not know that. I said it never happened here during my life. I'm 77 in two days. The oceans are full of plastic. This is a lot bigger than a cabal.

A woman had come by and asked us to tend her dog while she went into a nearby business. She now was in the conversation. She said her doctoral thesis had been on the making of a Nazi American president. I said Trump is a Klingon. The Klingon leader, actually. I found this pic online, using my I-phone, and showed it to them. They laughed. I said I had used that pic often at my blog. They laughed.

I said my problem with worrying about secret cabals is it ignores the ETs, which are very real and over which the cabals have no control. And, worrying about cabals ignores the angels and the demons, over which the cabals and the ETS have no control. P said he wasn't sure there were ETs and angels and demons. I said I had seen them all. They are there.

J and the woman went on about the sad state of things and what might be done about it. I said, when people ask me what I think is really going on with something bad, I say they won't like my answer, because there is nothing that can be done about it. Lucifer is behind it.

J and the woman went on more about the sad state of things, and what might be done about it. I said that method looks outward, instead of inward. That method never worked, and it never will work, evidenced by human history.

J asked why we are here on this world? I said, to become who we really are. It's really important to dig into things and see what is not visible on the surface. But if research in a library is all we do, then it is for naught. What is important is to take risks, to speak and act publicly on what we know.

The woman told of being in her office and library after an aunt had died. The books were her own writings and research and school text books. Including her doctoral thesis. She saw her aunt and all the books flew off the bookshelves onto the floor. Her aunt had the final say. I asked if this was a dream? The woman said, no, it actually happened in her office. I said I didn't think she understood her aunt.

I told them about the movie, "The Razor's Edge," starring Bill Murray. A seeker of arcane mysteries, the "hero's" most cherished possession was his small collection of books on that subject. After much searching, he ended up living in a Buddhist monastery, in very high mountains, perhaps northern India. He swept floors and stirred a large black cooking cauldron, day after day.

One day, a monk told the seeker the lama wanted to see him. The lama told the seeker it was time he went up on the mountain, alone. As he headed out, the lama handed him his rucksack containing his precious books. The seeker then is seen sitting in a cave with a view of snowy peaks and valleys. He is seen meditating and suffering. He has a small fire going in front of him. He is not well dressed for the climate. He is cold. He is not progressing. Then, he picks up one of his precious books and tears out pages and puts

them in the fire. He burns that book in that way. And another book in that way. And all of his books in that way. He returns to the monastery and the lama tells him it is time to leave.

The seeker returns to Paris, where he had lived before his journey brought him to the monastery. He met and fell in love with a woman. She was an addict and had a pimp. He tried to save her. He came close, but she was an addict and the pimp didn't want to let her go. The pimp was really angry she had tried to leave him, and when she tried to leave him again, he slit her throat and killed her. The seeker wonders out loud what was the point?

The point was he had stopped seeking and had started living and taking risks and trying to do his best.

The woman, who had joined J and me, said she had wanted to write a book. I said that was her aunt's point. She needed to get out of her old books and write a new book. And, given she was getting to know J, she should get herself a van and travel in it and meet people, and write about it.

J asked, what were the odds of him seeing me on the sidewalk in Alabama this morning, and then the woman joining us? Very low odds, J said. No, I said. The odds were 100 percent. That's always the odds when God is involved. No coincidence, J said. Correct, I said.

During a nap later yesterday, I dreamed I was running for mayor of Key West. I woke up, figuring that had to be about my encounter with J, and with homeless friend being jailed again by KWPD, for being homeless.

Last night, I summarized all of that during a phone conversation with my mainland friend, Young Prophet. I said I would love to be told by the angel bosses of me to publish a blog post in which I tell the people of Key West they might not care for next year's hurricane season, because of how their police and city commission keep jailing my homeless girlfriend, because she is homeless. In fact, they might not even want to be in Key West during the next hurricane season.

Young Prophet knew I had published several times that African shamans, pissed off over Key West putting a dog park on top of African slave remains, had steered Hurricane Irma dead at Key West. And, a few days before Irma's arrival, my homeless girlfriend told me of waking up that morning and seeing two huge arms and hands come down through the clouds and nudge Irma slightly eastward. And, just before Irma reached Key West, she turned slightly eastward and presented only her weak (left) side to Key West. 20 miles up US 1 and above there, received all of Irma. It looked like Hiroshima up there. A direct hit on Key West would have destroyed thousands of homes and apartments, and most, if not all, of the beautiful old-growth Keys in Key West. The city no longer viewed as "paradise".

Young Prophet knew I had published several times that Key West was spared that horror, because my homeless girlfriend was trapped there. And, instead of the city's police continuing to persecute her for being homeless, and racking up serious karma, the city

commission should give her a key to the city, a rent-free apartment, and a monthly cash stipend, for so long as she lives in the city.

Young Prophet agreed with my assessment that my homeless girlfriend had a purpose in Key West, and I had described it, and what could befall Key West during next year's hurricane season. I said I was reluctant to publish it without my angel bosses saying I should publish it.

In a dream last night, a police officer caught me hiding behind a bush. I had on me a loaded six-shot revolver and a large iron screw, which I handed to the officer. I woke up. Six is the number for Melchizedek. Imagine the Star of David, which was borrowed from the Eternal Angelic Order Melchizedek.

Whenever Melchizedek is involved in my human dramas, I'm expected to be tough as iron and to lower the boom. On myself, the dramas, and the other people in them.

Key West people, I give you what I feel is a required heads up. I am not a prophet, but it won't surprise me if Key West is wrecked by a hurricane, or hurricanes, during next year's hurricane season, and you might not wish to be there for it.

A nice lightning and thunder storm parked last night over where I live. Enough rain to break the long drought in my patch of town. A high of 87 degrees is projected for today. Such storms always herald change headed my way.

AMERICAN POLITICS

Star Date: September 15, 2019

I was told in a dream that Marianne Williamson and other democratic candidates spoke for God during the first and second Democratic Party debates this year. Of them, I thought Williamson was the most comprehensive, the most representative of what God wanted Americans, and humanity to hear.

I don't know how long it will be available on the Internet, but this YouTube of Trevor Noah interviewing Williamson after the second debate is impressive:

http://www.cc.com/video-clips/30qp9j/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah-marianne-williamson--running-for-president-on-a-morality-driven-platform--extended-interview

I told Gloria Reiser, who voted for Donald Trump, to save America from Hillary Clinton, that a vote for a bad candidate, instead of a vote for the other bad candidate, still is a vote for a bad candidate and absorbs that bad candidate and the associated karma.

I told Gloria it looked to me that Williamson's candidacy was a TEST to see how Americans, especially the Democrats, would react. I said I wondered what it meant (lay in store) for the Democratic Party, and for all Americans, that Williamson did not make the cut for the third Democratic Party debate?

I said I would have to spend time talking with Williamson, to know whether she is an avatar (channel) for a being such as Jesus, or whether she was forged in spirit and fire into a person who was able on her own to speak in such ways at the debates and then to Trevor Noah.

I leave America, and the world, to ponder the University of Alabama president got a rich Birmingham business man to give up his posh box seats condo in Bryant Denny stadium in Tuscaloosa, so President Trump could use it for MAGA rally at the 2019 LSU-Alabama dream college football game.

Several bizarre Alabama miscues had a very good LSU team up 33-13 at the end of the first half, enough lead for the Bengal Tigers to stave off a furious second half Crimson Tide comeback attempt and win 46-41.

I posted at afoolsworkneverends.blogspot.com that University of Alabama officials had jinxed the Crimson Tide, by allowing President Trump to use the game as a political gathering for his reelection bid.

Later came a report from Young Prophet about a dream he had a couple nights after that game.

> Well I told you my dreams are weird. Had a dream a couple nights ago that we were in the lounge area of a sports bar. Eating chips and salsa, with the winged ones, you be amazed at what a 7 foot war angel, can eat. President Trump is

appearing at the ball game. You ask “Wonder which Team eats the Trump Karma this week.” Gabriel smiles. “Good thing none of you have a gambling vice.” Trump comes on screen. Except the facade fades away. Charles Manson was President of the United States of America. No one could see it except you, me and TPTB. Starts doing his Helter Skelter bullshit.

Young Prophet’s TPTB (The Powers That Be) are Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, War Angel Khamael, and Melchizedek.

FRACTURED SOULS

THIS BELOW WAS PUBLISHED at *afoolsworkneverends.blogspot.com* on November 7 2019.

The other day my homeless girlfriend told me that she is seeing someone in Key West. I didn't ask who, but figured it was the homeless man who got arrested with her for trespass the last time she was jailed. He was jailed, too. According to her, they were given time served by the local judge who presides over misdemeanor cases.

I first learned of my homeless girlfriend running with this fellow from a man in Key West, who doesn't like her or me. When she called me from the jail about something, I read to her what the man had written to me. She did not seem happy. I did not yet know the homeless fellow might be more than a friend to her. I was suspecting that was the case by the time she said she was seeing someone in Key West.

Grubby respiratory, sinus and throat symptoms then moved into me fast one afternoon, which I figure has to do with my homeless friend and me coming to an end, at least in human ways. I figure it also is part and parcel of my winding down my long involvement in Key West and Florida Keys political and social affairs. A subconscious grieving, perhaps, as no tears are being shed.

It might also be the many political and social dramas, in which I became involved down there, which did not resolve, coming out of their hiding places in me, en route to leaving me. I hope that is the case.

Ignorance is bliss, my mother often said.

A fair question is: Why would I even have a homeless girlfriend in the first place, given all the baggage she was carrying, only a very small part of it I have told here? One why quite simply is, I fell in love with her, and it became a razor's edge thing. I suppose the other why could be viewed, in a way, as an indictment of humanity.

Of all the many people I met and came to know in Key West and the Florida Keys, my homeless friend was the closet, by some measure, to experiencing the interface between the spirit and the human realms. Yet, she did not seem to really want it, while I was engulfed by and it was part of me and my life, like breathing, drinking water, eating, pooping and peeing are part of me and my life.

I heard enough from her about her childhood to know that is where the seeds were planted that sprouted into choices she later made, which evolved into her life becoming a quite sad progression of mostly unfortunate experiences, including her living on the streets of Key West, when she wasn't in the county jail on the next island up US 1.

What I know of her childhood causes me to think about my own childhood. Gloria Reiser, my professional psychic friend, recently told me that one of her spirit guides told her that I should write a book about my childhood. I replied that, while there were some bright spots, my childhood mostly was a trail of silent tears, and if I wrote that book, it

would be named, “How to Fuck Up a Child”. I didn’t say it might be a miracle that I didn’t go mad and kill myself like my younger brother ended up doing.

I then dreamed of the basement of my parents’ second home. A boy I had tried to be his stepfather for a number of years was living in the basement. It was shabby. Alone. Lonely. I left. He’d had a terribly rough childhood before I met his mother, a licensed clinical social worker child and family therapist. His father had a PhD in psychology and his own private adult practice. Hardly a perfect stepfather, many times I felt I was that boy’s only real ally. His childhood story could have been named, “How to Fuck Up a Child.”

Same book could have been written about most homeless people I met and got to know in Key West and elsewhere. They all had acute post traumatic childhood distress.

Other homeless people I met were combat veterans suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder caused by their combat experiences in fake American wars. Their childhood stories weren’t pretty, either. They had double PTSD.

I think it’s fair to say most people I have known suffered PTSD rooted in their past experiences. What else could explain the wide-spread use of booze and other narcotic drugs in Key West and the Florida Keys? In America?

What else could explain the character and behavior of President Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, and the Republican and the Democratic Parties?

What else could explain America’s fake wars?

Greed?

Do greed, bigotry, religious fanaticism, lives of crime, for examples, come first, or are they reactions to soul wounding?

Why do some people with awful soul wounding turn out okay, or well, or great? Instead of, well, like my homeless friend and me?

My former stepson reconnected with me maybe in 2010. He was doing great. It started going in that direction when he enlisted in the Navy, instead of going to college, which his parents wanted more than anything. He did not tell them he was going to enlist. I said I would have loved to be a fly on the wall when he broke that news to them. We both laughed.

He said the Navy taught him math and cryptology, which is the study of codes, or the art of writing and solving them. He was terrible at math in a private grade school, for which I paid the tuition. I paid for everything he and his mother and I needed. She spent what little profit she made in her private practice on furthering her professional training.

My stepson didn’t get along well with many of the kids in the private school. Especially, he didn’t get along with the girls. After his mother broke up with me, his father put him in public school, where he blossomed socially, was well liked. But his grades were mostly Cs. The Navy changed that.

When he reconnected with me many years later, he lived on the west coast, as far from his parents as he could be and still live in the continental United States. He was studying physics in a community college, and was deeply involved in producing music. When I was

trying to raise him, he seemed most drawn to music, when he wasn't watching TV or playing video games, at which he was very good.

Why did my homeless friend, the daughter of two high school English teachers, and a former state high school barrel racing rodeo champion and rising basketball star, end up being an alcoholic, a felon, and homeless? Why did I end up being a mystic, and from time to time homeless, after nothing in mainstream panned out for me? I can imagine I would have ended up worse off than my homeless friend, if, in early 1987, I had not asked God to help me, and offered my life to human service.

I bet if I spent time with Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, and they opened up to me about themselves, and they did not start talking over me, or order me to shut up and leave, or jump up and leave themselves, then pretty soon it would be clear they really are about the same fractured souls deep down inside as my homeless friend and me, who were not highly thought of by the mainstream Key West status quo.

My great prep school, college and law school educations didn't come anywhere close to "saving" me.

When I ran for school board in the Florida Keys, in 2012, I harped at my blogs and at school board meetings and at candidate forums up and down the Keys, that the school district was really screwing up having only a college prep curriculum. The high school drop-out rate was high. The college drop-out rate for Keys high school graduates was high. Many Keys high school graduates who graduated from college, could not find good paying jobs.

I harped that every student should graduate from high school with a trade skill that would support them, and they were fluent in English and Spanish, and were able to touch type. I was the only, of about a dozen candidates, who represented the students' welfare against the status quo.

When I ran for county commission three times, and Key West mayor six times, I was the only candidate who represented Mother Nature's welfare against the status quo and its real estate developers, who could care less about the fragile Florida Keys being way over-developed, and there was not a person living there who could look in a mirror and honestly argue otherwise.

I was the only candidate who harped banning cruise ships that did not have advanced, up to date, waste water treatment plants on board. It was known that the dirtiest, worse possible cruise ships were calling on West, and they were dumping their wastewater and food scraps offshore.

I was the only candidate who harped the City of Key West Dock Master should stop selling fresh water to cruise ships, which could fill their freshwater tanks at their point of origins in southeast Florida. Key West was drawing all its fresh water from aquifers below and west of Miami, and piping it down through Keys to Key West.

I was the only candidate who harped the local governments and tourist industries should warn visitors that the ocean was infested with MRSA flesh-eating bacteria; that

MRSA was pandemic in Key West and the Florida Keys; that going into the ocean with a nick or scratch on the skin was perilous.

The status quo is an interesting thing. It's actually a living organism. It spends a great deal of energy trying to stay the same. It views any effort to change it as life-threatening, and it will use any and all methods, including lethal force as a last resort, to stay the same. The only thing I know that has a decent chance of changing the status quo is God, and even God seems developmentally-challenged in that endeavor.

I left Key West about a year ago, and did not go back. I don't miss Key West or the Florida Keys. I don't miss the dramas down there. I do miss quite a few friends I made down there. But then, I left other places where I had lived and made quite a few friends, and I moved on into the next phase of my totally unpredictable life.

To Key West Police Department.

Some of your officers have had fun making life hard for my homeless friend. I figure that had to do with her being my girlfriend, and they didn't care for what I wrote about them and KWPD and the sheriff's jail on my blogs. They harassed her to get at me. Why else would they selectively harass her? She did not bug them. She did not do anything spectacular to otherwise get on their radar.

Is it because she really likes vodka and cigarettes? Gosh, if there were no booze or tobacco in Key West, its economy would crash.

So, I leave those Key West police officers with this question. When your roll is called up yonder, how do you think the homeless man Jesus will speak with you about your treatment of my homeless friend?

THE AFTERLIFE

WHEN I HEAR CHRISTIANS say reincarnation is heresy, I point them to a disciple asking Jesus in the Gospels about the man whose sight Jesus had restored - Who had sinned, the man, or his parents, that he was born blind? For the man to have sinned before he was born, he would have had to had a prior life. Jesus said it was neither. The man was born blind so the glory of God could be manifested when his sight was restored.

Elsewhere in the Gospels, a disciple asked Jesus if Elijah had returned as prophesied in the Old Testament? Jesus said Elijah had returned, but he was not recognized, and the disciples knew he spoke to them of John the Baptist.

The angels on my case impressed on me that reincarnation is very real, and that there is a life review after we cross over, to the extent we did not have the review in our present life. Young Prophet's and my life reviews in this life have been… intense.

In that regard, here is something Gloria Reiser texted me about a Buddhist real estate developer attorney (BA) I knew in Key West, who got crossways with the law, was put on probation, made some adjustments, and recently crossed over.

> Sloan: I was slipping back into sleep and a man came to me with a message immediately. I have not met BA nor seen photo of him that I recall. But feel certain it was him. Communication was telepathic. Big globs of info conveyed in a package. Once package of info translated in my mind into words then more info sent. See next:
>
> Part 2. He was trying to explain that he is attempting to communicate with you directly. To let you know that he was in and out between this world and other worlds and spirit before "officially leaving life" perspective broadens immediately when physical body finally shed. See next text
>
> Part 3. Not to worry about him. He has much to do to resolve karma (not the word used but translates to karma in larger sense) but understanding is so clear now. He is resting in preparation for that work. See next text
>
> Part 4. There was the essence of a female form traveling with him. She seemed to be an ancestor like a grandmother or great grandmother though her appearance was that of younger than him. Her energy very soothing. I'm losing bits and pieces of this experience even as I write it. I remember he expressed he will continue to attempt to communicate with you directly so you can hear it from him. See next text.

Part 5. Sloan this is my take away from the experience. He is amazed at hugely heightened awareness after leaving earth form and is processing not only surprise and wonder of that but also the meaning, learning and interplay of energies comprising his life as BA.

The above are direct copy pastes from texts sent you on August 25 between 7:25 am and 7:39 am. I had been unable to fall asleep until after 3:30 am for some reason. Then a sound woke me around 6:30 am. I was attempting to return to sleep for hopefully a couple more hours when in slipping toward sleep the experience reported above took place.

Young Prophet later emailed about BA:

I have an old Komatsu D20-PL6 as well as 1964 International TD-340. They sit near an Indian mount. I followed a crow as it was flying, and I saw a man in a business suit sitting on the Indian mount.
An old fellow with a comb-over hairstyle, mostly if not all grey, was sitting there. I said hello and asked him what his business was.
He said that the farm was a nice piece of property. I told him I agreed.
I asked him who he was, "BA".
I asked him what he was doing. "Admiring this piece of property and waiting for the man to come around."
I asked him if he was related to locals, and he said no, he was from further south, he was up from Key West way.
It hit me who he was, so I asked him, why he was around. He said he had vexing business up there, pointing to the sky, or some things to fess up to and he then pointed down. Not to the ground. He pointed down.
So I said "And you've got nothing better to do than give me a visit?"
He said he was just admiring the property and it was just a shame- it'd make a nice development. Nice place to raise a family. What would I do with it?
I told him I'd see every tree replanted, that had been cut. I told him that if every acre was mine to do with, I'd see it all replanted in hardwoods.
He said "Huh."
I asked him what his plans were? He said, "I got business above and below, and if I'm not bothering you here, I reckon I'll admire the view. It's nice this time of year."
I asked him: "You know the man will be around eventually."
He nodded yes, and he had "basset hound eyes" when he nodded, with tears in those eyes.
I said, "Be better to face it one way or another and just be done with it, right?"
He stroked the grass, avoided my gaze and said, "I'd just as soon not face it head on right now."

I said “I’ll leave you be. I wasn’t quite where I thought I was” - down at the gate into my family’s land, to see if any real estate agents or developers were trespassing, which they do.

He kept stroking the fescue and I wandered off. I saw a red tail hawk in a distance, and he drew my attention away. Next thing I knew, I was awake and aware.

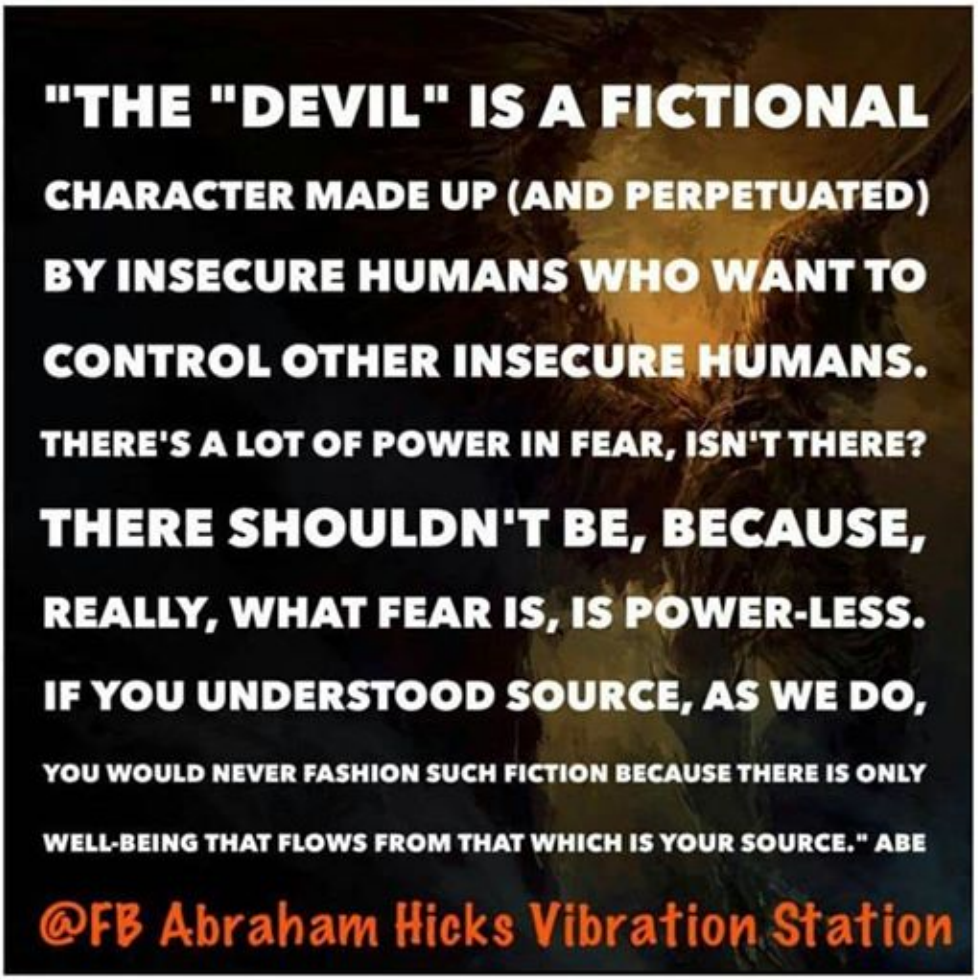
Young Prophet told me that, before the dream, he did not know what BA looked like. I said BA did have basset hound eyes and that hair style.

My recollection is BA did 5,000 hours of community service, as a condition of his federal probation. Perhaps that mitigates his situation in the afterlife? Perhaps that guides him to do public service in his next life?

THE DEVIL'S GREATEST TRICK IS DECEIVING IT DOESN'T EXIST

WHEN I WAS DOUSED in the New Age and Eastern Spiritually, I met people who were convinced Evil did not exist, there was no such thing as "the devil". I never believed them, and my own life experiences and angels who captured me proved to me the Devil indeed exists.

A somewhat younger woman, whose grandfather was deeply involved in the life and work of the Eurasian spiritual teacher, G.I. Gurdjieff, sent me a link to this below via Facebook private messenger. It was posted by a fellow, who seems 100-percent convinced the Devil is a figment of people's religious programming, imagination, metaphor, projection from self, the ego, etc.


"THE "DEVIL" IS A FICTIONAL
CHARACTER MADE UP (AND PERPETUATED)
BY INSECURE HUMANS WHO WANT TO
CONTROL OTHER INSECURE HUMANS.
THERE'S A LOT OF POWER IN FEAR, ISN'T THERE?
THERE SHOULDN'T BE, BECAUSE,
REALLY, WHAT FEAR IS, IS POWER-LESS.
IF YOU UNDERSTOOD SOURCE, AS WE DO,
YOU WOULD NEVER FASHION SUCH FICTION BECAUSE THERE IS ONLY
WELL-BEING THAT FLOWS FROM THAT WHICH IS YOUR SOURCE." ABE
@FB Abraham Hicks Vibration Station

Matthew Knott: "Every religious teaching must be seen as being metaphorical versus literal if the deepest meaning is to be recognized."

- Matt Kahn

"Thus LUCIFER – the spirit of the Intellectual Enlightenment and Freedom of Thought – is metaphorically the guiding beacon, which helps man to find his way through the rocks and sandbanks of Life, for Lucifer is the LOGOS in his highest, and the 'Adversary' in his lowest aspect – both of which are reflected in our Ego."

- Helena Blavatsky

Maiko Cyneteli: No amount of books read and any knowledge, teaching never will help to guide someone, neither group. Only love, only feeling, interpersonal meaningful individual interaction is the way to real individualization.

Sloan Bashinsky: This poem came to me in late 1995:

Love without Truth is blind,
Truth without Love is harsh.
Two sides of the same coin,
They live together,
Or die.

If people were to live in my skin not very long, they would know the Devil indeed exists, and demons exists, just at God and angels of the Lord exist, just as lions and lambs exist, just as people exist, just as fishes and birds and bugs exist, just as trees and plants exist, just at extraterrestrials exist, and the Devil's greatest achievement was deceiving people it did not exist. I grew up in Christianity, but along the way something happened and, starting early 1987, I was taken for a ride by supernatural beings who turned me every which a way but loose and inside out and upside down, and stood me before a mirror a long time, with many refresher courses, and they are still at it. I concluded about Jesus, that to the extent people live and behave as he lived an behaved, they are saved by him, whether they heard of him or not. And, life continues after death without the human body, and there is a life review in the afterlife to the extent it did not happen on Earth, and from that life review the next adventure is decided, either on Earth, or somewhere in some realm.

Matthew Knott Sloan Bashinsky: Thank you for sharing and also for speaking upon your experiences. Consider the following alternative perspectives…

"Every religious teaching must be seen as being metaphorical versus literal if the deepest meaning is to be recognized."

- Matt Kahn

The Devil is a metaphorical character, which symbolizes our ego or our inner child in disguise, which at times plays the role of our shadow/dark side. “I must also have a dark side if I am to be whole.”

- Carl Jung

The greatest illusion in this world, is the illusion of separation. It serves its purpose for our experience of growth and evolution as Souls or individuated expressions of Spirit/God. Illusions only control us when we think they’re real. In seeing through the illusion of separation, ultimately there is ONLY God. In that sense, ALL is Divinity, no matter the form or disguise.

“Even then, since all things are made of God, even the demons have divine nature once you pierce their disguise.”

- Shankara

“Darkness is divinity in its most inactive state – in its most dormant state.”

- Matt Kahn

“When nothing acts as proof of anything, other than divinity in form, you have outwitted the dream of judgment.”

- Matt Kahn

“Christ is the true, spiritual, higher self of every individual. Each of us has within him the Christ, just as Jesus had, and we must look within to recognize and realize our sonship, our divine origin and birth, even as he did.”

- Charles Fillmore (As excerpted from: ‘The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary’ 1931)

“Notice every Biblical and religious event is full of spiritual metaphors. Spirituality is about viewing the world from a place of wholeness and completeness. The fall from Paradise symbolizes a fall away from unity into multiplicity. The birth of Christ represents potential birth of Christ consciousness in each being. This opportunity to live harmony, show universal compassion, does not roll around once a year. Every moment in fact reveals the plain presence of love and truth.”

- Liara Covert

“Christ consciousness does not refer to a human man. Christ is not a man, but Universal Consciousness (Logos) available to all, buried deep in our own mind as Universal Consciousness, but for most, not yet realized. You save, redeem and heal yourself. You always have. You always will. You were created with the power to do so from before the beginning of linear time. So, all human beings are already saved. We save

ourselves because we are energetically designed to self-correct like the rest of the Creator's universe. Every moment, avenues exist to increase the flow of life force energy. This separation of ego-self from the Whole is what people call Sin."

- Liara Covert

"One of the most fundamental errors in our human understanding of the universe is the idea that it is even possible for anything to be completely separate from anything else. Every point (and therefore everything) in the entire universe is connected to every-other point and thing in the universe by the SPACE that everything in the universe is defined by.

You may think of space as being empty, but science has proven that this perception is an illusion, that space is actually completely full of little tiny tiny vibrations called "vacuum fluctuations" that when all added up equal an infinite amount of energy.

This field of energy that permeates the entire universe has been given a lot of names over the decades: the aether, the plenum, the zero point field, the quantum foam, the source field, the vacuum, God, call it whatever you like, the SPACE that fills everything also connects everything. There is no such thing as "separation" in the universe." - Nassim Haramein

Because we think we are something, we imagine there must be something operating all this Universe.

What IS pure intelligence, awareness Being. It may also be called God, Self or pure Consciousness.

It is not a thing.

We think we are a 'thing', an object or ego and therefore It must also be a 'thing'. Actually 'we' are 'IT' but we haven't realized this yet. We imagine that behind all actions there is an actual separate 'doer' doing something. When you discover your formless Self, everything is observed to be simply unfolding spontaneously as one whole functioning.

- Mooji

Sloan Bashinsky: I spend time in cyber space, Matthew, because a lot of people spend time there nowadays. I came to your FB page today because a woman acquaintance a little over ten years younger than I sent me the link to this FB post of yours, as part of trying to convince herself, I suppose, as well as me, that the Devil does not actually exist. When I disagreed, she said it's all duality. I said it's all God, and Evil is God separated from God.

Much has been said and written for ages about human and spirit goings on. I have said and written much. All of it stemmed from direct experiences with what science cannot begin to grok. You quoted C.G. Jung, Matthew. I have read his autobiography, and something he wrote about "the ET phenomenon". He said it was archetypal. There were no ETs. Problem is, he was mistaken. I know that for a fact. Just as I know for a fact that the being known as Jesus actually exists now. And Archangel Michael. And Melchizedek. And, Lucifer. And plenty more that does not reside in human bodies. I'd be stark raving

mad, though, if I thought for an instant that I could prove any of that. Belief is the foundation of human religions. After a while of direct experiences with what cannot be proved, or disproved, by science, or by religion for that matter, belief incrementally is replaced by knowing some of what else is around, but certainly not the whole of it. Not even angels know God very well, but much better than you, or I.

But yes, if you wish to take the metaphorical or symbolic approach, I can join you there. I deal with metaphor ongoing, in human events, in my dreams, in my visions. Whenever I engage a human event, I know I am engaging spirit forces behind it. I get roughed up plenty internally, and attacked plenty externally and internally. This that my job. It also is my life. And, I do human things I enjoy.

But in my bizarre journey this time around, and in the bizarre journey of several other people I have known, most of whom seemed to have been "infected by" what had a hold of me for a while, but there were others who came to it before I met them. We, people, are not alone. On this planet, and I suppose on other planets, and in other dimensions, so-called sentient beings have experiences that enable them to grow, or not. Probably the very first and core step is to stop projecting. That is the intent of A Course in Miracles, if you have read it. I was given a course in mirrors, instead, which was awful. Given is not really accurate. it was imposed. ACIM says human beings on Earth live in projection. They are captured by it. Thus, whenever something punches your buttons, don't react. Don't try to fix or change the exterior. Do that every day for a year and you will emerge a different person, who at least has a chance to progress (evolve).

In March 2006, I was told in my sleep by a familiar voice, that humanity had failed to reach escape velocity, and this had happened before, but I could still do it, and I would be given experiences designed to increase my velocity, like scientists send space vehicles to celestial bodies to enter their gravitational field and be sling-shotted away at a greater speed. That's been going on ever since. Before that was no picnic. A dark night of the soul, then after a couple of years, the black night, which made the dark night seem really nice.

There is so very much more in heaven and on earth than is in our human philosophies, and I am pretty sure what is above is reflected below, and what is below is reflected above. Which, well, might be FREAKY.

As far as I can tell, what each person can do to change and evolve on this planet is to look inside first, before trying to fix the exterior. Yet, also engage the exterior in the moment as courageously and kindly and truthfully as can be mustered. This entails, yes, leaving the herd. And a herd, or herds, which replaced the first herd. It entails going whole hog at whatever is attempted. Being willing to die, even. Be ostracized. Be locked up for what you think and say. And do. Even though you have harmed no person, but have shaken the status quo, which is like a living being that views change as life-threatening and to be resisted with lethal force, if necessary.

Jesus in the Gospels is a terrific example of that path. And Gandhi. And Nelson Mandela. There have been many others. They evolved experientially, existentially. What they knew was one thing, what they did, or didn't do, was something else entirely. Their

lives were living gestalts. On this planet. In other realms. Simultaneously. They knew Evil was very real, and they knew it was inside of them, and outside of them. The beings who captured me in early 1987, went by the names of Jesus and Michael. Later, Melchizedek joined them. They told me, and other people I knew, they were trying to teach us how to live as they live, which is very different from how most human beings live.

Matthew Knott Sloan Bashinsky: I appreciate your contributions to this post Brother. Indeed, it is ALL God, yet that which is infinite and omnipresent cannot be separated from Itself. Prior to thought, there is no perceived separation, as such it is an illusion of the mind. Another view is that we're all ET's as we are Souls playing human roles, and our Souls are not from Earth.

"There is absolutely nothing wrong with contemplating duality as long as you know it to be an idea. If duality cannot introduce itself to you and explain how it works without you assisting in the matter through comparisons and judgments – it has no separate existence. While many contemplate the nature of separation or attempt to bring polarity into balance, they have yet to see each attempt as a journey toward the other side of the same idea.

In reality, you cannot travel to the opposite side of an idea without discovering another one. The point is not to dissolve separation, but to directly see it as an idea. If separation existed, your fingers could miss each other, or fight for a dominant position. Instead, each digit works in harmony with the intelligence of the hand for the well-being of your body.

To experience the difference between reality and ideas, you can ask yourself:

"Do the things that I label know themselves by these labels, or is it merely a reflection of how I was taught to label things?"

"Am I seeing things as they are, or simply how I was taught to view each label?"

"Can I see the things I've labeled, along with each opposite counterpart, do not know itself as such things?"

"Maybe day and night do not call itself day or night, perhaps only I do?"

"What if reality is serving the freedom of my journey by becoming in my experience whatever I insist about it?"

"No matter how life is seen, perhaps it's only this way to me?"

"If I suspended each label and merely noticed each sight, sound, and feeling as experiences of sight, sound, and feeling, how does my experience change?"

Even the notions of non-duality is not the arrival of truth, but a sense of contrast felt when momentarily freed from ideas of duality. If you wish to explore freedom from duality or separation, just acknowledge both as ideas. They aren't good or bad, in need of being cleared, or a challenge to overcome. They are merely ideas arising in a mind, awaiting your willingness to return to love.

Since the mind tends to be as noisy or fearful as the heart is closed, it is your willingness to love what arises that resolves each spiritual argument that can only free you

from one idea by escorting you into another. This process is known as reframing. In order to experience the true joy of liberation, it can be as simple as recognizing each idea, as an opportunity to love the one hiding in ideas, as they have never been loved before.

In the end, you may come to see how true clarity and liberation has nothing to do with ending duality, overcoming separation, or waiting for something else to begin. It is through your willingness to honor ideas, as simply being ideas, which provide endless degrees of experience as gifts for your adventure. If your experience seems anything less than the adventure it is destined to become, I invite you to surrender to love by embracing the one who thinks, acts, and feels however you appear to be.

"No matter the path or process being explored, anything other than loving yourself could only be another idea that only the innocence of ideas debate or discuss. This is why self-love is the heart of awakening. It is a love revolution that begins with you."

- Matt Kahn

"Awareness assumes the form of the finite mind in order to simultaneously create and know the world, but it doesn't need to assume the form of mind in order to know itself. Awareness is 'made of' pure knowing or being aware, and therefore knows itself simply by being itself. Awareness doesn't need to reflect its knowing off an object in order to know itself, just as the sun doesn't need to reflect its light off the moon in order to illuminate itself."

- Rupert Spira

"We're all angels and earth is an angel academy. This is a school where we are a graduating class of angels, where after this lifetime many of us will go to work as spirit guides for the new wave of future souls that incarnate. In the angel academy you're learning to become the master, the angel that you are by learning what angels do. So it's kind of like there are victims in the angel academy who are there to be rescued by angels until they've been rescued enough times that they realize they're an angel. And then when a victim starts doing what angels do, they become the angel they always are. A victim is an angel that doesn't know themselves, and an angel is a fully transformed victim."

- Matt Kahn

"You are the angel who was sent here to guide the evolution of a being as your training in the angel academy in becoming a spirit guide. But what you weren't told is that the life you would be guiding as the angel or spirit guide, is the body in which you inhabit. So you are the angel guiding the life and times of a character that you're also portraying and playing out. You are your spirit guide in form. You are the angel you've been waiting for, and it's loving what arises that brings your angelic presence to life."

- Matt Kahn

"You can't get into heaven. You can't get out of heaven. All of this is heaven manifested to look like it is something else to give you the experience of growth helping you to become the angel you already are."

- Matt Kahn

"We are on a journey of becoming that which we already are. That is the impossible paradox of our lives."

- Adyashanti

There is no way to experience anything outside of you. Anything that happens, occurs between the ears. There is no outside of us, it's all an inside game.

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott**:** Gosh, Matthew, you quote other people of note like Christians quote the Bible and people of note in it, although they tend to quote Paul a bit more than they quote Jesus, maybe because Jesus is a bit harder to swallow? What would really interest me, and perhaps people who look up to you, Matthew, is to hear from you what you yourself have experienced in life and learned and grown spiritually in that way. Meanwhile, you cannot banish Evil by believing, thinking, wishing or saying it does not exist, any more than you can banish God in that way, or love, or truth, or pain, or joy, for examples. Yet, it has been my experience with the New Age, for example, that it is convinced Evil does not exist. Which suits Evil just fine.

Matthew Knott: Notice that prior to learning the judgment/label of "evil", you knew of no such thing. Likewise "good" or "bad". What may be good to you, may be bad to another and vice versa. We can believe that evil exists, or we can See that God/Life exists. In being that God is infinite, there cannot be anything outside of, separate from, or other than It. "Most people do not see their beliefs. Instead, their beliefs tell them what they see."

- Matt Kahn

"Any beliefs you hold bind you to an illusory world of limitation. Whatever you believe is thus bound to be challenged for beliefs are contrary to your natural flow and infinite being. Consciousness is a mystery often pursued because it is unseen. Knowing is beyond belief, beyond doubting and seeking proof. Knowing is your core state. Knowing true nature is loving everything equally, seeing harmony in all. The less separation you see, the more you feel the silent truth and wheel of time."

- Liara Covert

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott: Again, you quote other people. I imagine if I had a chance to sit down with any of them, and they did not try to control the dialogue, in short order they would be trying to control the conversation. I wonder, Matthew, if you have had any direct experiences with what science cannot disprove and religion cannot prove?

I also wonder if you are being influenced by what you seem to deny exists. You kinda remind me of the fifth case in the Jesuit priest Malachi Martin's classic exorcism textbook: HOSTAGE TO THE DEVIL. That case involved a youngish man who had gotten involved in esoteric spiritual practices and unawares possessed by a demonic entity. He was a while accepting it and getting delivered.

Same happened to a good friend of mine. A non-practicing Jew, who viewed himself as a new age guru, yogi, astrologer, Taro reader, runes thrower, Taoist, vegetarian, organic foods and pure or filtered water consumer. He worshiped wheat grass juice. He was sure Evil did not exist. One day, I saw the countenance of Lucifer in his profile and suggested he get a copy of HOSTAGE TO THE DEVIL and read it. He reacted. I said it was just a suggestion. He got the book, then he reacted again. I said I didn't make him buy the book. The next day he reported a dream of the night before. His favorite Jewish grandmother Came to him, smiling, holding out a copy of HOSTAGE TO THE DEVIL. My friend said he would read the book. A few days later he called me and said he had a problem, didn't he? I said, yes. He asked how long I had known. I told him, and what I had seen, and I didn't tell him because I figured he wouldn't believe me.

The same angels on my case had recently taken him on and he knew it. They had given him what seemed like perfect spirit hearing and vision. As he and I talked, what he was sure did not exist came toward him. He was terrified, asked me to stay on the phone with him. I said I was there, and the angels were there, and they were what he needed to trust. They took him through it a number of times. He was terrified each time. It was a process, not anything like casting out demons. The further he went with the angels, the deeper the deliverance went. I had already been through it somewhat differently, and would go through it a few more times.

In a reprint of his book, Father Martin said the Roman church was possessed by Lucifer at very high levels, evidenced by the church had discontinued teaching priests the sacred rites of exorcism. Some years later, the church resumed teaching the rites, which are very different from how my friend and I were delivered. That led me to think perhaps the methods used by the Roman church and other Christian sects are not a complete cure? For each person has a demonic twin, which reflects the external Evil. Jesus faced both during the 40 days in the wilderness, after which, the gospel text says, the devil left him to return at a more opportune time.

Matthew Knott Sloan Bashinsky: I will continue quoting people if I feel called to, it's how I choose to operate at times Brother. You can allow yourself to be bothered by it, or accept what is. I recall being 'saved' when I was 9 at church and feeling an energy go through me from head to toe and then back out again. Many years later I realized that separation was an illusion, and that what I felt/experienced that day was not something separate from me, but instead an aspect of myself letting its presence be known. While incarnated within the dream of time, form & separation, in dualistic thinking, I accept darkness. In Seeing the bigger picture and from a higher perspective, I See that there is

only Light. Nothing and nobody is separate from or external to my Self, as such nothing but my Self (the One 'I AM') influences me. God exists. Life exists. Existence exists. WE are That, at our core. God is infinite, nothing can exist outside of/separate from It, not even what we've labeled as "evil" or "demonic", although the conditioned mind would have one believe or convince itself otherwise. God is omnipresent; nowhere and in nothing/nobody is God not present. It's ALL One, and it's ALL "God"... or in other words...

Light/Life/Love/Consciousness/Awareness/Presence/Divinity/Infinite Being.

"Evil" (or "demonic") is simply a label people have learned along the way and now project onto their experience of what IS. Before learning that label, they did no such projecting. It is up to us to become aware of and See through our conditioning. In judging our experience of something or someone as being 'Evil', we're only judging ourselves.. whether we realize it or not. My experience is about me, in the sense that it is based upon my interpretation and conditioned filters through which I am perceiving what is. I am not separate from that which I see, although I may think I am. Beyond thought, Oneness IS. Underneath it all, I am consciousness, as is ALL. There is no difference between the Creator and creation, just as there is no difference between the ocean and its waves. We're experiencing a holographic reality where within it, each piece is equal to the sum of the whole. (Everything is every-thing). Each human being is a holon; simultaneously a part and a whole. As Souls or individuated expressions of God/Spirit, we are each not only in our own world but ARE our world, and are experiencing our own unique version of life/earth, while we all share the same space or consciousness. The Observer/the observed are one. If I judge what I see, then in seeing through the illusion of separation, I judge myself. Judgment is fear-based, arising from the belief in the deceptive appearance of separation. Fear judges. Love loves. Love is the absence of judgment. I cannot love myself and judge myself or another at the same time. So as for us to embody our deepest essence which is that of Unconditional Love, life is trying to end our relationship with judgment.

Trish Hill Matthew Knott: This is so symbolic. It clearly shows what it is you believe in. It's always best to listen not to what verbiage a man uses but to look at what he uses as a representation of his self. I know Mattie, I know

Matthew Knott Trish Hill: Thanks for sharing your perspective. Much love and many blessings to you!

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott: I appreciate you speaking from your own experiences.

In a perfect world, there is no separation. There is only love and truth, which are in harmony. I have yet to meet anyone living in that state of being. I have met people who experienced it once, or sometimes. I have experienced it from time to time.

I wish everyone was in that state of being all the time. How different that would be!

Meanwhile ...

I agree God is in everything and every being, and separation from God is, well, I suppose part of getting to know and appreciate God better? For how can that happen, unless absence from God is experienced?

Kinda reminds of the parable of the prodigal son. By the end of that parable, the prodigal seems in much better shape than his older brother, who never strayed from God. Many years ago, I came to view that parable as prophesy of the redemption of Lucifer. Even later, I thought it was a story Jesus told on himself: he once had been a prodigal. How else, I suppose, could he have emphasized with people separated from God? Wonder how the older brother in the parable would have gotten along with Jesus' assignment 2,000 years, or so, ago?

I was put with a woman for a while, who, was healed and cleaned up by Jesus, Michael and Melchizedek, according to her. I watched her go through it, took about 3 weeks, the healing sessions were terrifying for her, 3 a day, usually. At the core was she had been sexed by her father from age 3 until 18, when she knew she had to leave her parent's home, but did not know why.. For, she had no conscious memory of the incest, but the extensive volatile healing convinced her it had happened.

When the healing was done, she had what seemed like perfect spirit vision, hearing and empathy.

She told a yogi his heart was closed. It really disturbed him. What that judgement, or simply his condition?

My lady said Jesus and his mother, Mary, came and told her Mary had molested Jesus in his youth. That was on the heels of my getting for several days that there was an evil greater than Lucifer, and then my lady said Michael told her that, if Sloan could conceive an evil greater than Lucifer, then it existed. Was that judgment, or revelation?

I was furious, not over what my lady was told, but over it being kept hidden, because I knew what great havoc a secret like that had wreaked in the collective unconscious of not only Christendom, but also humanity. Was that judgment, or knowing?

My lady said Michael told her that incest was a prevalent back then as it is today. Was that judgement on Michael's part? Or just stating what was?

My lady then suffered the eruption of maybe a dozen white-hot boils on her inner thighs, just below her vagina. We viewed that as physical and metaphysical proof of what she had been told by Jesus and his mother.

After my lady suffered about three days of that agony, it came to me that we needed to make love, to move the process along. She, of course, didn't like the idea, but she was an angel-trained shaman and understood why I said it. So, we made love, slowly. It was beautiful. Her orgasm was really powerful. The white-hot boils then began to recede. In a week, they were gone. All the verification we needed, even if no one else believed us.

Backing up to shortly after my lady was healed and changed by the angels, she said they told her that some people might not like it, but on this world, women are God's chosen vessels for love, and through love, women come to truth; and men are God's chosen vessels for truth, and through truth, men come to love.

Then, my lady said she was told by the angels that all women on this world are in a rabid war with God, and that war is the cause of all wars on this world, including all man-made wars. Was that judgement, or revelation? I told her I figured that had to do with women are second-class citizens on this world; it's a lot easier being a man.

My lady said the angels told her to send letters to all her women friends, stating what she had been told about the chosen vehicles and all women being in a rabid war with God. She sent the letters. Her women friends did not take it well. Was that judgment on her part, or obedience to her calling?

She told me that Michael told her of Michael and other angels in service to God: they were all fallen angels, who had returned to God, and that was why they were assigned to try to help people on this world, and I supposed elsewhere.

Michael, I accept as true what you told me of your supernatural childhood experience when you were saved. It was of God. I had a somewhat similar experience when I was in my 45th year, which was the beginning of the end of the man I was, and the beginning of someone I did not yet know. Do you accept what all I told you above, which my lady told me she experienced, was of God?

Jesus taught not to judge other people, yet when he was teaching people and was told his mother and brothers had come to see him, he asked the audience, who were his mother and his brothers? Then he said they were those who did the will of God. It was unheard of for a Jewish man to not receive his mother and his brothers. Was that judgment of his mother and his brothers, or simply the truth about them?

When Jesus spoke to or about his mother in the Gospels, it was pejorative. Was that judgment? Was that his way of reminding his mother of what she had done with him when he was young?

My lady's parents had not been religious. They did not attend church. She had no religious training growing up. She was, best described, a white aborigine with a New Age perspective. She had not thought there was Evil. The angels changed her mind. Was that her judging, or becoming more aware?

In the Gospels, Jesus spoke very directly, and not kindly, of the devil, which he called Satan, and of Satan's angels. So, I suppose Jesus was still stuck in duality Or was he simply being real?

Jesus' first reported miracle was turning water into wine at a wedding, After his mother had nagged him to do it. Was he still dominated by her dating back to the incest? Was that when the Devil returned at a more opportune time?

More miracles came. Miracles became the core of Christendom. Jesus' teachings about how to live in keeping with God's ways took second seat, or so it looks to me. Is that judgment on my part, or actual observation and reasonable wondering?

Is a physician in judgment telling a patient she, or he, has cancer? Or is that a diagnosis?

Is an exorcist priest, such as Malachi Martin, in judgment telling a patient, or the mother church, he, or she, or it is demonically possessed? Or, is that a diagnosis?

If you, Matthew have moved beyond duality, beyond judgment, into unconditional love, then hooray for you!

The Sufi poet Rumi said some things about that place.

What you call love
is but subtle degrees of domination.
Love is like the moon in the window,
it's just there!

Beyond good and evil is a field,
and I will meet you there.

My take was that was what Rumi heard God say to him.

Matthew Knott Sloan Bashinsky: My pleasure Brother. Thank you for sharing about and speaking upon your experiences as well!

Another view is that this is a perfect world, and there is no separation except the illusion/deceptive appearance of it, which can be seen through….

"What the mind designates as 'perfection' or 'imperfection' is not the same as what is felt as inherent perfection."

- Liara Covert

"When you wake up you realize that everything is perfect, even in its seeming imperfections."

– Mooji

"Notice only perfection exists. You accept it or believe filters of your own mind. Awakening involves you opening to awareness, growing conscious of inner knowing that has always been, though hidden from view by belief in illusion. Even when life does not meet your expectations, it is always perfect. Seeing the world as a mirror is recognizing all you see is a reflection of how you see yourself. If you see conflict in the world, this points to conflict within, resistance to who you are. Start seeing yourself as you are. Stop seeing yourself as you are not. The world is as it is. Cease to judge and be revitalized. Peace, love and harmony arise. From where? From nowhere. Simply be open. Judgement prevents truth/love from entering your scope. If you want to live in perfection, you have to let go of self-created limitation, that is, all your beliefs and values. Every human has the potential to stop seeking what being already is. The ego is a timeless teacher available to all. Simply stop looking and start allowing. See things through the eye of God like an innocent child. If you reduce things to your own understanding, you see less than perfect, only see based on limited personal experience of the observer. However you envision yourself, you become that. Envision yourself as less than, create ideas to confirm this and

experience that. Come what may, divine perfection is ever-present. The eye of truth/love sees all of us as one vibration experiencing itself through everything else."

-Liara Covert

The biggest misconception in life is the belief that the world is a separate object, whereas in truth, the world is the expression of the Subject, which is what we are. Thus the saying, 'I don't see the world as it is, I see the world as I am,' is true.

- Mooji

"The human mind only observes with filters, and thus perceives only its own distorted reflection. Mental and emotional filters distort everything until you see things as they are and stop seeing reflections of who you perceive yourself to be."

- Liara Covert

"The whole world is you, yet you keep thinking there is something else."

- Hsueh Feng

Realizing that separation is an illusion and seeing through it can change many perspectives. There cannot be any separation from that which is infinite and omnipresent. The Truth is simple, the ways of obscuring the Truth are complex. Although we can experience the perception of thinking or believing we're separate from God, we cannot be. Interesting about Jesus being molested by Mary.. makes you wonder. In seeing through the illusion of separation, there is no 'with' God; there is ONLY God. (God has never been with you. God has always been You.) As such, ALL is 'of God'. Ultimately there is only the will of God in existence, for if it weren't so, what was would not have been and what is would not be.

Just because a book said that a man named Jesus said something, doesn't mean that he actually did, nor does it mean that those were his exact words, or that aspects of what he may have said, or was said to have experienced, could not be interpreted metaphorically rather than literally. Your mind is either open to that possibility or not. Duality is simply an idea. Oneness IS. Analyzing is not observation. All aspects of life are, to each of us, whatever we choose to make of them.

"The core state of Being is Unconditional Love. It has no opposite. Fear arises from the ignorance of not knowing you are Love. The very not knowing is a feeling you are incomplete."

- Liara Covert

LOVE = Living Our Very Essence <3

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott: Unfortunately, I have ongoing engagement with demonic entities, fortunately, I suppose, I also have ongoing engagement with angels. I suppose, because oft as not, the angels get onto me about how I am going about things, as

well as inform me of how to go about things and what's going on that I cannot see or hear. Looks to me there is a heap awry on this world, and in the adjacent spirit realms. Is that delusion? Is thinking not being, or feeling, perfect, delusion? I think, Matthew, when you leave this life, if not before, you will see that it's a bit different than you think now. I agree, however, that living our very essence is why we came into this life. It's a challenge each person faces. How we went at it is addressed after we leave this life.

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott: Meanwhile, you are correct, who knows what Jesus actually said, who was not there when he said it? Same can be said for every person you quoted to me.

Matthew Knott Sloan Bashinsky: Another view is that you have ongoing engagement with various forms/expressions of your Self (or the Consciousness that You Are) which you have judged/labeled as 'demonic' entities.

While to you the same can be said for *every* person I've quoted, the people I've quoted here weren't quoted from something they were alleged to have said or expressed 2,000+ years ago. Beyond Hsueh Feng and Adi Shankara, everyone quoted is still alive in the flesh, and one can know that each quote is something the authors of those quotes did actually either say, put in a book, or post online.. via researching readily available audio, video, books, or online posts.

Sloan Bashinsky: Back in Jesus' time, oral traditions and history were passed down word of mouth as well as written. I can't imagine someone making up a lot of what is attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, it's too radical, I think, to be invented. What I wonder is, how much he said and did is not told in the Gospels? I think it was Peter who said at the end of one his letters, if everything this man (Jesus) said and did were written down, he supposed it would take all the books in the world. In the Gospels Jesus told his disciples what he told them in private wise men and kings would give all they had to possess. He told his disciples he taught the masses in parables, but he taught them straight up. For examples of what did not get included. I've read and heard of plenty of spiritual "teachers". I've met quite a few. myself. I been in lots of churches. I got drenched in the New Age, which seems about as confused as Christendom. I found no one I felt was anywhere near close to being fused with God. I read of a few people who seemed close, or there. Jesus struck me as the most advance of them all, of whom I had heard. I never heard of some of the people you quote. But I viewed Madame Blavatsky, whom you quoted, as a lightweight.

As for everything around me is a part of me, well, that's a nice theory, which I have heard before. Perhaps it is. I view much of what came to me from the spirit realms as parts of me I had lost, forgotten, thrown away, or never new where there. It's same for everyone. I view people who come my way as messengers to me about something in or around me. I wrote two books about that. The first was to view all legal problems as messages to us

about us, our soul wounds, karma, past relationships, etc. The second book was more intense. A Course in Mirrors I called the process. I dunno. Using your perspective, I'm a part of you, but you might not agree if you lived in my skin a while. If you lived in my skin a while, it might alter your perspective of just about everything. But you don't live in my skin, Nor do I live in your skin. I recognize it is possible that you are one with God. John of the Cross was. Francis of Assisi was. Based on what I read about them and experienced with them metaphysically. I'm not there and don't expect to be there in this lifetime. Nor, other than perhaps you, is anyone I know or met in this lifetime, or read about or heard about, who was living on this planet.

Matthew Knott: Not only is it possible that I am one with God (as are you and everyone else) it already is so. We are each the One in ALL, ALL in one, or as the poet Rumi expressed.. "You are not just a drop in the ocean. You are the mighty ocean in a drop."

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott: Heh, I think Rumi must have had multiple personality disorder, then, since God told him, What you call love is but subtle degrees of domination; love is like the moon in the window, it's just there. And, Beyond good and evil is a field, and I will meet you there. Then, there was the chickpea poem, where the chickpea ain't too thrilled about what the chef is doing to him. Rumi is the chickpea.

CHICKPEA TO COOK

A chickpea leaps almost over the rim of the pot
where it's being boiled.
'Why are you doing this to me?'
The cook knocks him down with the ladle.
'Don't you try to jump out.
You think I'm torturing you.
I'm giving you flavor,
so you can mix with spices and rice
and be the lovely vitality of a human being.
Remember when you drank rain in the garden.
That was for this.'
Grace first. Sexual pleasure,
then a boiling new life begins,
and the Friend has something good to eat.
Eventually the chickpea
will say to the cook,
'Boil me some more.
Hit me with the skimming spoon.
I can't do this by myself.
I'm like an elephant that dreams of gardens

back in Hindustan and doesn't pay attention
to his driver. You're my cook, my driver,
my way to existence. I love your cooking.'
The cook says,
'I was once like you,
fresh from the ground. Then I boiled in time,
and boiled in the body, two fierce boilings.
My animal soul grew powerful.
I controlled it with practices,
and boiled some more, and boiled
once beyond that,
and became your teacher.'

Sloan Bashinsky Matthew Knott: Getting to where you say you are at is a long not particularly fun process, unless God simply gives it to you.

Sloan Bashinsky: There was a fellow who wrote a book called Conversations With God, who said he was God, we all are God. But he sure didn't seem to be able to do what all God could do, nor much of anything God could do. He was, yes, a piece of God. We all are. Even the Devil.

Matthew Knott: "Humility comes from realizing that God is the Doer, not you. When you see that, how can you be proud of any accomplishment? Think constantly that whatever work you are performing is being done by the Lord through you."

- Paramahansa Yogananda

There must either be 'you' living in this body or God living in this body.
Who does better?
Bear in mind it was God's house in the first place.
Where do 'you' come from?

- Mooji

"Notice pure consciousness is. 'You' arise by taking on projections of the world around you. Pure consciousness is colored by them. "Your" identity takes shape as you decide to accept or modify the projections. That decision gets repressed in the unconscious and becomes a fixation. Once repressed, you can no longer change it. Your thinking process grows from projections and your decisions arise as the basis of thought. Ego (who you believe you are) arises from who you are told you are. The false idea of you stems from early projections, decisions and fixations. It's like ego is the image you see in the mirror. The basis of the underlying operating system (beyond the mirror) often goes unrecognized. The ego wants center stage. Eliminate the operating system, and the ego

disappears ('you' see no reflection). Yet, to hold 'your' attention, ego imagines problems. This prevents you from seeing behind the curtain/mirror. By thinking it's unworthy, in need of improving, ego prolongs its false existence. As long as ego can maintain the illusion of imperfection, 'you' do not see ego arises from false logic. No entity really bears your name, personality, or sense of person-hood. It's an illusion created by pure consciousness, filtered through primary projections. To eliminate the fixation, grow aware the projections are false. By imagining inadequacies, you perpetuate suffering and the illusion of separation. The real issue is the projections only arise because originally what was offered was a lack of love. Do not trust the projection that produced 'your ego'. It was not God saying he did not love you, it was people in your life that unknowingly withheld /did not provide constant, unconditional love. No matter how much self-improvement you do at level of ego, you are still unworthy because of the structure of the ego. No matter what cosmetic changes you make, no matter how much money you obtain, none of it will end the projection the core of the ego desire to improve itself. Only by growing conscious you are a Being of Light does the desire for love shift beyond Ego processes and yearn for improvement. Innermost Source of love is pure consciousness from where all creativity comes. Be the endless field of abundance, joy and bliss."

- Liara Covert

Sloan Bashinsky: If you read Yogananda's autobiography, you saw he had a Jesus-like yogi, who taught him God's ways, incrementally. Yogananda did not himself claim he was fused with God, nor did his yogi claim that about himself. They both saw becoming more like God was a process.

Matthew Knott: Thanks for sharing as you feel called to Brother.

"The teacher is really yourself. You have created a teacher to wake you up. The teacher would not be here if you were not dreaming about the teacher…" - Robert Adams

Sloan Bashinsky: With all due respect, Matthew, I did not create Jesus and Michael, whom God sent to be my teachers, after, in early January 1987, I had failed in every way I figured a man could failed. had reached the end of my rope, and was out of bright ideas, and I knew it, and in that desperate state I prayed: "Dear God, I do not want to die like this, failed, please help me. I offer my life to human service." About ten days later, in the wee hours, maybe 2 a.m., I woke up and saw two spirit beings hovering above me in the darkness, I figured they were angels, no wings, but they were clearly not of this world, etheric, white with blue tint, and I plainly heard not with my ears but in my being, "This will push you to your limits, but you asked for it," I remembered the prayer, "and we are going to give it to you," and then saw a white flash and felt jolted by something electrical, my body lurched, then that happened again, and then again, and the two beings dissolved into the ethers. That was as real as what you reported you experienced when you were

baptized. That's when the man I had been began to die and eventually become someone else entirely. Along the way, I came to understand the two beings were Jesus and Michael, and then Melchizedek joined them, and then the already wondrous and often very difficult training became much more difficult. At times I prayed to die and feared I would live. I plotted suicide daily for 16 months starting February 1997, and something stayed my hand. I take no credit for surviving what all they put me through. And still put me through. If it were done to humanity, what was done to me, perhaps 500 people would survive. Perhaps only 50. Of the people you quoted, of whom I have heard, perhaps Yognanda would have recognized it for what it was. The Baptism in Fire and Spirit, which Jesus said in the Gospels he came to provide, while he himself experience during that lifetime, is very real. It is the death and rebirth of which Jesus spoke. Of which most Christians cannot begin to imagine. But some people over time experienced it. And still experience it. Some of them were Christians, some not. It has nothing to do with religion. It has to do with God, which religion attempts to define and even control, which is not possible.

Sloan Bashinsky: The Devil is no more an archetype than you and I, Matthew. The Devil is as real as you and I. As are Jesus, Michael, Melchizedek and many other angels known to humanity. All of them came out of God, as did you and me. This poem came to me in May 1995.

Earth,
the sacred prism
through which souls are refracted
into their elemental parts,
purified in Holy Fire,
then one-forged and sent on their way
to not even God knows where,
simply because they are all
unique emanations of God,
evolving …

Sloan Bashinsky: I tell stories (report) what I and other people really experienced, which embody spiritual workings in and outside of human beings on this world. Not many people seem to care for my stories, perhaps because they are about a lot of really difficult inside and outside work, which is the only way to spiritually evolve on this world, unless God simply enlightens you, but is that evolving?

Matthew Knott: You're free to think that about you not creating them, yet the mind is the greatest deceiver of all. While the "I" that you're perhaps referring to didn't create them, the real You did. "I" can be seen as referring to the ego, yet it also can be seen as referring to 'One' ('I' being the roman numeral for One) as in the One Being that we all

are ('I Am') or the One in ALL. We can think we're our ego, and only this human vessel, or we can See that we are Consciousness, from which everything/everyone manifested and is an expression of.

The 3rd dimension says: "There's something deeper to be explored."
The 4th dimension says: "Here are all the things I've learned from exploring."
The 5th dimension says, "I AM what I've explored."
The 6th dimension says, "Exploration is the one I AM."
The 7th dimension says, "I AM the one exploring itself."
The 8th dimension says, "I AM the one, the one I AM."

- Matt Kahn

"You are the creator of it all, and you don't remember creating because it was created before memory was imagined."

"Time is a memory."

"Everything that I've ever experienced has been God's will. And that God is not above me, that God is not beyond me, that God is within me. And that God has created this lifetime, and I am the God that has created this lifetime. And I created it prior to the imagination of space and time, which is before all people show up in the play, which is why you don't remember creating your life, because you weren't a person. Not that you're a person right now, but you didn't create this in time that's why you can't remember creating it. But this was created by the reality of God that you are, to incarnate into this character to celebrate your infinite potential as a character who would become the greatness of what surviving every moment would surely reveal." - Matt Kahn (As excerpted from the following 11-minute video that changed my life...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZNZHMnyz3I)

Love the experience that you shared ... powerful. I respect that to you the devil is real.

YOUTUBE.COM
The Ultimate Surrender - Matt Kahn

Sloan Bashinsky: The Devil is real. Every person has a demonic twin. Jesus had one. It came out during the 40 days in the wilderness. I have met my demonic twin. I have seen other people meet their demonic twin. I have met Lucifer and demons in spirit ways and in many people. I have met God in spirit ways and in many people. If you had had my experiences, Matthew, you would see things differently. You are free to believe whatever you wish to believe, but when you preach it to other people as the God's truth, then you become liable to God for it being the God's truth, and if you are mistaken, then your karma will be ... interesting.

Matthew Knott: Brother, you need not continue repeating that the devil is real. I get it. You think/believe and thus have convinced yourself that the devil is real. Another view is that You are what's real in all of this. We all have an ego, or inner child in disguise which masquerades at times as our shadow. This is perhaps the 'demonic' twin you're referring to. Of course Brother, if we all had each other's experiences, and perception of those experiences, we'd all see things differently. Another view is that nobody has ever met God, as everyone IS God, thus they've only encountered their Self in infinite forms. Your opinion is not my reality, but I thank you for sharing it.

Sloan Bashinsky: I think and believe nothing about the Devil being real. I have had the direct experience many times with the Devil, I know the Devil exists. I have had the direct experience with God many times. I know God exists. Leave it at that, Matthew, instead of converting it again to what you think I believe.

Matthew Knott: That which believes and labels, is also that which denies. If you had never learned the label of the "Devil", you would not "know" the "Devil" exists. You've only ever experienced God, or your Self. Being that God is infinite, God is our reality.

Sloan Bashinsky: You seem not to have paid attention to some of my reports of people I knew very well, who were convinced the Devil does not exist, but were cured of their conviction and it shook them to the very core. II imagine if what they experienced visits you, you will be shaken to the very core.

Matthew Knott: Love and Blessings to you Brother.

Sloan Bashinsky: Godspeed, Matthew.

= = =

About Me

Sloan Bashinsky

Read afoolsworkneverends.blogspot.com . . . then pray for me, or send money, a biker chick, a hit man, or whatever . . . more seriously ;-) Born 1942 in Birmingham, Alabama. Probably have had a dozen different lives since then. Not fooling. Started off normal, whatever that is. Not normal any more, as lots of people would swear on stacks of Bibles. Until the mothership retrieves me, I'm here, waiting, spoofing, poking, laughing, writhing.

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